

A BRIEF
EXPOSITION

What God hath done OF *all his mercies*

THE EPISTLES OF PAUL
TO THE
PHILIPPIANS
AND
COLOSSIANS.

By JAMES FERGUSON,
Minister at Kilwinning.

I Tim. 3. 16.

*And without controversie, great is the mysterie of god-
liness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in
the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the Gen-
tiles, believed on in the world, received up into
glory.*

John 17. 3.

*And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee
the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou
hast sent.*

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A BRIEF
EXPOSITION
OF THE
PRINCIPLES
OF
POLITICAL
ECONOMY
AND
SOCIAL
SCIENCE

BY
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TO THE READER.

CHRISTIAN READER,



I do offer unto thy view in the following Exposition, an Essay of a Reverend Brother, the Author of this Piece, toward the opening up of two parcels of the holy Scriptures, in such a way as both the sense and use thereof may be given so briefly as may be. And albeit he did after much entreaty, scarcely permit these first fruits to appear in publick: Yet we are not afraid (being well acquainted with him) to recommend it to thy favourable acceptance: And are confident that thou wilt finde in it, that measure of solidity and sweetnesse, joyned with perspicuity and briefnesse, as may help thee to converse more profitably with God, speaking in his Word to his Church, and invite thee to blesse God for him, and the paine he hath taken for thy good: We hope also that by thy acceptance hereof, he shall be encouraged to give further proof of the Gift and Grace

MS. A. 9. 1. 1917

TO THE READER.

of God in him, by opening more of that precious Treasure; Yea, and that others also may be thereby invited to put their hand to so necessary and usefull a work upon the whole, (or, at least, the most difficult and most profound) Scriptures, That so the Lords People (whose callings and necessary affairs do force them to make most use of this brief way of writing) in their ordinary reading and meditation on the Scriptures, may have an easie help, ready at hand, to furnish them with matter of meditation, and direction for their up-taking and applying of the Scriptures, according as their duty and present case may require: And this, We say, without prejudice to those, whose ability to buy, and leasure to read, shall suffer them to make use of other larger Commentaries of holy and learned men. But howsoever, This way of brief Exposition of Scripture, among other means, We humbly conceive may prove a profitable help to propagate the knowledge of the Gospel, and to vindicate the truth of the Religion professed in this Island, when men, even of an ordinary capacity, shall see that We professe in Our **C O N F E S S I O N O F F A I T H** nothing, but what immediately riseth from the text of Scripture, and what is very often confirmed and inculcate therein. As the Lords stirring up of his Servants to lay out their talents, in this and the like way, for the good of his People, is unto us a token for good in these times

TO THE READER.

times of so great distemper; So the improving and making use of these means would yet further confirm all the lovers of Sion, that notwithstanding all that We have met with, yet there is hope Our provoked Lord will dwell among us, and continue the course of his mercy toward this Island: We say, provoked Lord, because as it is obvious to the observation of all the Godly on the one hand, with what tenderesse and loving kindnesse the Lord doth follow his process and pleading of his controversie with his Church in these Islands, for our slighting of Christ, and of the offer of so rich grace in Him; and how He seasoneth our sad afflictions, by continuing of the Gospel preached, and by stirring up His faithfull Servants, specially in ENGLAND, by their godly and learned Writings, to strengthen all who are on the way toward Him, and to reclaim others from their wandrings; So it's too too manifest on the other hand how openly He is provoked by the great abuse of these mercies; and that the more we are corrected, we revolt daily more and more: for, by how much more light doth break forth, men love darknesse and follow it so much the more. Whence it is that Atheism, Irreligion and Profanity do every where abound, and that the Lord (justly recompencing men's wantonnes of wit, love of their lusts more than of God, and their not receiving the love of the truth) hath let loose so many errors and delusions, and
given

TO the READER.

*give up so many to be misled thereby. All which,
 as they ought not to be lightly look'd upon, but as
 grievous sins, and sad punishments of sin; So
 they ought to stir up all those, who would approve
 themselves to be his bidden ones, to mourn in
 secret, and to stand in the gap, lest those evils
 come to a greater height, and ripen us for yet sad-
 der plagues, if we do not entertain more heartily,
 and improve the light, while we have it, more
 diligently. And for our encouragement, we may
 be confident, that the Lord, who knows how to be
 good to such as seek Him, in the worst of times,
 whatever may befall the Lords People for a season,
 shall make Truth still at last to triumph; And that
 the Labours of His Servants shall not be lost, nor
 their expectation perish for ever. We shall detain
 thee (Christian Reader) no longer in the entry, but
 requesting Him from whom every good and per-
 fect gift cometh, that He would fit and incline
 many more to put hand to this Work, and would bless
 this little Picce and the like means, to thy eternal
 welfare. We remain in Him,*

Thine, to serve thee in the Gospel,
 From Edinburgh, DAVID DICKSON,
 June 15. 1656. GEORGE HUTCHESON.

A BRIEF
EXPOSITION

Of the Epistle of PAUL to the
PHILIPPIANS

The ARGUMENT.

PAUL having planted a Church at Philippi, a City in Macedonia, Act. 16. 12. And now understanding by their Minister Epaphroditus, that they remained constant in the Doctrine of the Gospel, although under some hazard of seduction by false Teachers, he writeth this Epistle unto them; the scope whereof, is, To excite them unto constancy, and further progress in faith and piety (having removed the scandal which might arise from his present sufferings) Chap. 1. And particularly to the study of humility and unity, Chap. 2. And to beware of false teachers, Chap. 3. After which, he exhorteth them, to the practice of some Christian virtues, commending them for their benevolence: And so concludeth the Epistle with some salutations, and his apostolical benediction, Chap. 4.

CHAP. I.

THis Chapter hath three parts: In the first whereof (after the Inscription, ver. 1, 2.) he exciteth, and encourageth them to constancy and progresse in faith and piety; partly, by shewing the good esteem which he had of them, manifested by his praying to God, and blessing him for them, ver. 3, 4. and that because of the ir

2 *A brief Exposition of the Epistle* Chap. I.

constant good example, first their fast embracing of the Gospel, ver. 3. and because of his perswasion of their perseverance, grounded on Gods saving work of grace begun in them, ver. 6. the evident signs of which grace he perceived in them, ver. 7. which made him sincerely love them, ver. 8. And partly by his seeking growth in grace from God to them, ver. 9, 10, 11.

In the second part of the Chapter, lest his present affliction might prove a stumbling-block in their way, he shewed, that the Gospel had gained much by his suffering already, to ver. 19. That it should have no losse, but advantage thereby in time coming, to ver. 25. And that he was very confident that his trouble should have an happy issue, in his deliverance from imprisonment, for their future benefit, to ver. 27.

In the third part of the Chapter, he exhorteth them to constancy and unity, ver. 27. And to courage under sufferings, by several arguments, unto the end of the Chap.

Ver. 1. Paul and Timotheus the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the Saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi, with the Bishops and Deacons.

IN this verse is the Inscription, declaring who was the Author of this Epistle, together with the joynr after-ter of the Truths contained in it, and to whom it was written. *Doct. 1.* Christian sobriety doth teach us to speak sparingly of our own credit and authority, except when weighty reasons do urge thereto: for, although Paul doth design himself often from his office of Apostleship, when he writeth to these Churches where his Apostolical authority was questioned (1 Cor. 1. 1. compared with 1 Cor. 9. 1, 2.) yet here he doth it not: because these Philippians did not call his Apostleship in question. 2. Unity and concord among Ministers in giving joynr testimony to the same Truths, doth add a weight unto what they preach, in the esteem of their hearers: for, Paul joyneth Timothy with himself in the In-

Inscription of the Epistle, that the Truths contained in it, appearing to be attested by them both, might have the more weight with the Philippians; *Paul and Timotheus.*

3. Preachers of the Gospel are in a special manner the

Servants of Christ, as being wholly dedicate, *2 Tim. 2. 4.* and perpetually, (*Luke 9. 62.*) astricted to his more immediate service: As servants were of old to their masters; so were *Paul and Timotheus the servants of Jesus Christ.*

4. It is abundant credit, and doth commend a man sufficiently unto those who really are Christs, that he is known to be a servant of Jesus Christ: for, *Paul* seeketh; and expecteth to be had in due regard for this, That he and *Timotheus* were servants of Jesus Christ.

5. The whole bulk of those visible Churches, unto whom the Apostles did write, is designed by the name of *Saints*: partly, because some among them, and those the better, though usually not the greater part, were really Saints, and inherently holy, *Rev. 3. 4.* for whose cause the whole

Community are called *Saints*: partly, because it is the duty of every one within the Church, and the end of their calling, to be holy, *Levit. 11. 44.* and partly, because all

and every one within the visible Church, are federally and externally holy; in so far as God, by entering Covenant with them, hath separated them from other people, as dedicated unto him for his worship and service:

So whole *Israel* is said to be sanctified, *Exod. 31. 13.* and the child procreate of parents, whereof one is a Believer, is called *holy*, to wit, by this external and federal holiness,

1 Cor. 7. 14. And thus *Paul*, writing here to the visible Church, calleth them *Saints at Philippi.*

6. As, to make a man internally and spiritually holy, it is necessary he be in Jesus Christ, united to him, and drawing influence from him by faith, *Joh. 15. 5.* So to make a man externally holy, to be called and esteemed federally holy, as every member of the visible Church is said to be holy;

and in Christ, requireth a visible and externall union with Christ, consisting in external covenanting and serious professing of Truths relating to him; the effect of

which union is the communication of common gifts, unto every one according to his measure, 1 Cor. 12. 6. &c. for this cause the Apostle here calleth all the professed Christians in Philippi, *Saints in Christ Jesus*. See *John 15. 2* which suppoeth some to be in Christ, to wit in the way presently mentioned, who yet may be found fruitlesse, and consequently unregenerate. 7. The dignity and parts of a Minister, or of any Church-Officer, do not exempt him from a necessity of being taught, exhorted, reprov'd and comforted: for, *Paul* directeth this Epistle (wherein he teacheth, exhorteth, &c.) as to the people, so to the Church-officers; to *Bishops and Deacons*. 8. The Bishops mentioned in Scripture, are nothing else but ordinary Pastors, and Overseers of particular Flocks, of whom many might be, and were in one City, such as Philippi; which could not have been, if they had been trusted with the actual oversight of many Congregations, and of whole Provinces, as is now alleaged by those who distinguish betwixt Bishops and Pastors, and make them Office-bearers of a higher degree in the Church: for the Epistle is directed to the *Bishops at Philippi*. 9. As the Lord Christ hath appointed some Office-bearers in his House for the oversight of the souls of his people, as Ministers, and Elders, here designed by the name of *Bishops*, or Overseers; see *Act. 20. 17.* compared with *ver. 28.* So he hath appointed others, to take inspection of their bodily necessities, that those who are indigent may be supplied by their care, and the charity of the Flock, who are here called *Deacons*. See *Act. 6. 1.* &c.

Verf. 2. Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

He saluteth them most Christianly, by wishing unto them *Grace*, that is, Gods favour, as the fountain; and *Peace*, that is, peace with God, peace with their own conscience, peace one with another, and all sort of prosperity, as streams flowing from that fountain: and all this

Chap. 1. of Paul to the PHILIPPIANS. 3

this he seeketh from God through vertue of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ. *Doct. 1.* Gods grace and favour is the root and fountain, from which, peace with God, with our own conscience, and all sanctified prosperity, and peace among our selves, do flow: for, all those are understood here by *peace*, which Paul wisheth unto them as the fruits of Gods grace, joyning *Grace and Peace*. 2. In seeking things needful from God, we would look unto him, not as standing disaffected to us and at a distance from us, but according to the nearest relations, which we can reckon our selves to have unto him: So Paul eyeth God as his and their father, reconciled through Christ; *from God our Father*. 3. Whatsoever cometh from God to Believers, is conveyed unto them by vertue of Christs merit, (whereby he hath purchased all things for them, *Isa. 53. 5.*) and of his intercession, whereby, he applieth his purchase unto them, *Heb. 7. 25.* Whence it is, that he asketh from God the Father, but *through Jesus Christ*.

Verf. 3. *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,*
4. *Alwayes in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy.*

The Apostl's scope being to excite those Philippians unto constancy, and further progresse in faith and piety, doth for this end wisely make known the good esteem which he had of them, in so far, that whensoever they came to his remembrance, which was very frequently, and especially in prayer, he was constrained not only to pray, but to blesse the Lord for them. *Doct. 1.* It should be the frequent subject of a Ministers thoughts, to observe how the work of God doth thrive among his Flock: So was it with Paul: for, saying, *upon every remembrance of you*, it is certain he had many remembrances of them. 2. When a faithful Minister seeth the people of his charge thriving by Gods blessing upon his labours amongst them, it must needs be to him the matter of much joy and thank-

thanksgiving; how sad soever his case be otherwise: So, the Philippians profiting maketh Paul (though a prisoner) glad; *making request with joy.* 3. Then is our joy, for things comfortable and pleasant unto us, rightly expressed, when it runs out in praises and thanksgiving unto God: for, so doth Paul expresse his joy; *I thank my God.* 4. Then will a man the more chearfully bless the Lord for favours bestowed upon others, when he looketh upon God as reconciled to himself: for, hereby Paul is helped not a little to give thanks, when he looketh upon God, as his God; *I thank my God.* 5. As a Minister should rejoyce for spiritual favours already bestowed upon his Flock; So also he should pray for what is lacking: for, Paul doth both; *making request with joy.*

Verf. 5. For your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now.

He giveth reasons for his joy on their behalf: where- of the first, is, Their embracing the Gospel (whereby they were brought unto fellowship with Christ and his Church) and that so readily after the first preaching thereof amongst them; together, with their constancy therein unto that very time. *Doff. 1.* There is a real fellowship and communion, which those who embrace the Gospel have one with another, *1 Job. 1. 7.* and all of them with Christ, *1 Job. 1. 3.* which consisteth in those nigh relations, and the exercise of mutual duties founded upon these relations, under which one of them standeth toward another, *1 Cor. 12. 15.* and all of them towards Christ, and Christ towards them, *Revel. 3. 20.* Hence he calleth their embracing of the Gospel, *their fellowship in the Gospel.* 2. That a people, or person doth readily assent to the call of the Gospel, and remaineth constant in the profession of, and obedience unto it, is matter of thanksgiving and praise unto God: for, this was Paul's joy for those Philippians; *even their fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now.* 3. It is not
fir

fit that any man, especially a Minister, should boast much of the reality of grace in any upon a profession newly taken up, until after a times trial, it be seen how the person holdeth up in his profession, by walking equally in the beside of duties, and constantly in variety of cases and conditions, lest haply he be afterwards ashamed of his confidence: Therefore, Paul doth not boast much of those Philippians, untill he take some proof of them; from the first day until now.

Verſ. 6. *Bring confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*

A second reason of his joy, was, The confidence which he had of their perseverance in grace unto the end, and of their being carried on by the same power, which did begin the work of grace in them. This he speaketh unto the whole Church, not as if every one in it, to his certain knowledge, in the judgment of infallible verity, had been truly gracious; But, because in the judgment of charity (which supposeth the best, where it hath any probable appearance, and no evidence to think otherwise) he found it equitable to think so of all, especially, being perswaded that there were many such among them, in whom only this and the like expressions were verified, which were spoken generally unto all. See 1 Cor. 6. 11. compared with Chap. 11. 31. Doct. 1. They who have received grace, shall never totally lose it; but undoubtedly persevere therein to the end: for, Paul is confident of this very thing, to wit, Of their perseverance. 1. The certainty of the Saints perseverance, is not grounded upon the stability of their resolutions, Psalm. 73. 2. nor yet upon the stability of gracious habits in themselves, Rev. 3. 2. But upon the power of God, which is engaged for their preservation against all opposition: for, the ground of his confidence is, that God is engaged for the thing; *He who hath begun a good work in you, will*

perform it. 3. The work of grace is not perfected at the first, but hath its own beginnings, progresse, and accomplishment at death; *He that hath begun, will perform it until the day of Christ.* 4. The whole progresse of this work, from the first step unto the last, is all from God, and from no power of our own free-will; *He who hath begun, will perform.* 5. Albeit grace in Believers will be perfected at the time of their death, *Heb. 12. 23.* when their soul shall be presented before Christ their Judge, and carried up to be with him; yet the compleat consummation of their blessed estate in soul and body is reserved till Christs second coming, wherein he shall raise up their bodies in an incorruptible estate, unite them to their souls, and carry up the whole man with him, to put on the capstone on that work of grace begun here; for this cause, saith he, *He will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ,* not only of their particular judgment, but specially of his second coming,

Verl. 7. Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, in as much as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the Gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

A third reason of his blessing God for them, clearing and confirming the former, is, He conceived himself bound to judge of them all as truly gracious, and such as should persevere unto the end, by reason of his hearty affection towards them; which, together with his judgement of them flowing from it, was grounded upon the evident signs of grace in them (the same grace for kind, which he himself had) in so far, as they had in a special manner owned him and in their own speech joyned with him: both in his sufferings & actions, for the defence and confirmation of the Gospel. *Doct. 1.* Where sincere love is among Christians, there will be a communion of prayers, praises, and of good hopes: for, from this that he had them in his heart, he inferred, it was meet, or, just for him to do all

all the foresaid duties for them. 2. That which knitteth the hearts of Christians in the straitest tie of mutual love, is, not so much carnal respects and natural relations, (2 Cor. 5. 16.) as the real evidences of Gods grace in the person loved: for, *Paul had them in his heart*, because they were partakers of his grace. 3. Albeit no precept, or practice, in the whole Scripture, doth evince, That visible Churches are to be constitute of those only, who ought to be accounted truly gracious by discerning Christians; (Matth. 13. 28, 29, 30.) Yet this impedeth not, but the Gospel hath been so far blessed in some places, as that the whole members of some particular Churches, by their godly and sober conversation, have given positive evidences of true grace in them, even to very discerning Christians; and that the Gospel may have the same effects in some particular Churches is yet possible: So *Paul* thinks it meet to judge of them all at Philippi, as truly gracious, to wit, all who were of age; *It is meet for me to think this of you all.* 4. The judgment which one Christian passeth upon the inward gracious estate of another, is not always according to the verity and truth of the thing; but it is grounded upon, and flowing from charity, which hopeth the best in things which are uncertain, (1 Cor. 13. 7.) and so may be deceived: Thus *Paul* doth not affirm positively that they were all gracious, only it was meet for him to judge so of them, and that because of his charity and affection towards them, which did, and justly might, preponderat with his judgment in the present case; *because I have you in my heart*, saith he. 5. There must be some positive, though not infallible evidences, of the inward work of grace in a person, before we can warrantably pass a judgment, even from charity, upon him as truly gracious: for, *Paul* groundeth his charity upon such evidences; *in so much as both in my bonds, &c.* 6. It is the part of each professor, to avow, support, speak for, joy, with, and by all lawful means defend those who are suffering for the truth of the Gospel, or employed any other way for the defence or confirmation thereof; for, they

they were partakers with him, both in the desert and confirmation of the Gospel. 7. When a person, living otherwise without offence, is zealous for the Truth of God, owning those who do suffer for it, contributing his uttermost to uphold it, even when the powers of the world would bring it down, and doth not draw back for fear of any hazard; it is ground sufficient for *Charity* to judge of that person, as truly gracious: for, *Paul* thinketh it meet to judge so of those *Philippians*, because they owned him, both in his bonds, and confirmation of the Gospel.

Verf. 8. For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all, in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

He confirmeth what he spoke (ver. 7.) of his sincere love towards them, by taking God to witness, how much he was affected towards them with a truly Christian love. *Ques.* 1. The most secret inclinations, and motions of our inward affections, are plain and naked before God: otherwaies *Paul* would not have appealed unto him as witness of the sincerity of his love and affection, saying, *God is my record.* 2. The taking of an Oath, or appealing to God the searcher of hearts, as a witness to the truth of what we affirm, is not unlawful; but in some cases a duty: for, *God is my record*, saith *Paul*. 3. Though the taking of an oath be lawful in some cases, yet not for every trivial business, but for grave and weighty causes: for, here *Paul* doth it for a weighty cause, even to procure and facilitate this peoples attention to the Gospel, and to secure the success of his pains among them, as appeareth from the scope, in order to which he perswadeth them of his hearty affection: for, saith he, *God is my record, how greatly I long*, &c. 4. The mutual love of Christians should not be carnal, for selfish and worldly reasons and ends only, but spiritual; A love like unto Christs for fervency and sincerity; a love, whereof Christ is the author, and having Christs honour and the spiritual good of those who are loved for

Chap. II of Paul to the PHILIPPIANS. II

its main ground, motive and end : for, that is to love in the bowels of Christ. 3. Christian love among Christians, doth evidence it self much in Christian fellowship, as occasion offereth : for, in place of saying, *how be loved them*, he saith, *how be longed for them*, as desiring to evidence his love that way, if he had opportunity.

Verf. 9. *And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment.*

He exhorteth them yet more unto further progresse, by seeking those things from God to them, wherein he would have them to advance and grow ; as namely, Love to God and their neighbour, together with knowledge, and the spiritual sense or tastings of Gods goodnesse and love: for, the word rendered *judgment*, doth also signifie spiritual sense and experimental knowledge. Doct. 1. There can be no such measure of grace attained, but further progresse ought to be endeavoured : for, he prayeth that those Philippians (whose graces he hath presently commended) *may abound more and more*. 2. Love unto God and our neighbour, especially unto those who are Gods, is so necessary, 1 Cor. 13. 1. so comprehensive, Matth. 22. 37, 39. and meeteth with so many things to extinguish it, Matth. 24. 12. that we are not easily to be satisfied with a small measure of that grace : for he prayeth, *that their love may abound*. 3. Such love and zeal are commendable and to be sought after, as have a proportional measure of knowledge going along with them : for he prayeth here, *that their love may abound in, or, with knowledge*. 4. There is a spiritual sense and experimental knowledge, whereby we find what Scripture speaketh of Gods goodnesse verified in our selves : for, so much is understood here by *all judgment, or, sense*. 5. This sense and experimental knowledge, would be sought after, as the most effectual mean to beget, entertain and encrease the love of God in those who are his : for he prayeth, *that their love may abound in, or, with sense*.

Verf.

Verf. 10. *That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere, and without offence till the day of Christ:*
 11. *Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.*

Here four ends are subjoynd; for attaining whereof, he would have them abounding in the three fore-mentioned graces. 1. That they might be endued with a spirit of discerning betwixt Truth and Error, right and wrong: for, so the former part of ver. 10. is to be read, *that ye may try things that differ*: of which trial, *the approving of things that are excellent*, (as the word is rendered in our Bibles) is the commendable effect. 2. That they might be sincere without any mixture of sinful byasse in their choice of things after trial. 3. That they might be kept from being occasions of stumbling unto others, ver. 10. And, 4. That they might abound in good works undertaken and gone about in the strength of Christ, and tending to Gods glory as their main scope, ver. 11. *Doct. 1.* That a Christian may be thoroughly fitted to judge of things controverted, there is more required than notional light in the brain, to wit, Practice according to what he already knoweth, and some experimental knowledge and taste of divine Truths in his own heart: for, the Apostle, *with knowledge*, requireth, *abounding in love and sense*, that so they might try those things which differ. See Heb. 5. 14. 2. Such knowledge as enableth a man to discern betwixt Truth and Error, right and wrong, is then worthy to be sought after, when sincerity in choosing what is right, and rejecting of what is wrong, is joyned with it; for, he conjoyneth those two, *Ye may discern things that differ, and be sincere*. 3. It should be one of our main desires, (whatever be our wrestlings with corruption within our selves) that yet it may not break forth to the offence of others: So Paul prayeth, *that they may be without offence*. 4. No shorter term ought to be assigned unto our growth and daily progress in holiness than the day of our death; for, then, and not till then,

then, shall grace be completed, *Heb. 12. 23.* Thus he prayeth, they may abound more and more, *unto the day of Christ*; that is, Either the day of every mans death; so called, because of the particullar sentence or judgment; which is passed by Christ upon every man immediatly after death, *Luke 12. 20. and 23. 43.* or, the day of Christs second coming, *1 Thess. 5. 2.* And this he will have the term-day of their endeavour to continue sincere and without offence: because the final and open acquittance of the Elect from sin and misery shall be reserved until then, *Matth. 25. 33, 34. 5.* It is not sufficient for Christians to walk without offence, by abstaining from what is grossly evil; but they must also set about the doing of what is good: *being filled with the fruits of righteousness.* 6. It is not the doing of one good work, or of some few, which will sufficiently evidence a man to be righteous, except he aim at the constant practice of every thing which is good: for, that is to be *filled with the fruits of righteousness*, or with good works, whereby the sincerety of our righteousness is tried, as the tree by the fruits, *Luke 6. 44, 45.* 7. That a work be truly good, or, a fruit of righteousness, it is necessary that the work be done by one who is in Christ by faith, and by virtue of strength drawn from Christ: for, these fruits required are by *Jesus Christ*, that is, by strength drawn from him: which presupposeth the person to be ingrafted in him, *Joh. 15. 4.* 8. It is necessary also for a good work, That the doer of it have Gods glory for his main scope, and not vain glory, credit, or any by-respect: otherwise he is an empty vine, bringing forth fruit unto himself, *Hos. 10. 1.* So they are to be *unto the glory and praise of God.*

Verf. 12. But I would ye should understand, Brethren, that the things which hapned unto me, have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel.

In the second part of this Chapter, lest they should have stumbled at his present suffering, and feared lest there-

thereby the Gospel should have been totally extinct; he sheweth, first. That the Gospel had received much advantage already by all those sad things, which had befallen him. *Diss. 1.* It is the duty of Christ's Ministers, as to forecass what may prove a stumbling-block in the way of the Lords People, to retard them in their christian course; So, by all means to endeavour the removal of it; Thus *Paul* wisely foreseeeth, and carefully labour-eth to remove that offence and discouragement, which Christians were apt to take from his sufferings; *But I would ye should understand, &c.* 2. So wise and powerful is God in working, that what is intended by adversaries to obscure his glory, and to mar his work, He maketh it tend to the further clearing of the one, and promoting of the other; which holdeth chiefly in the sufferings of his servants for Truth, whereby the Lord hath promoted the Gospel frequently as much as by their preaching: So *Paul's* sufferings *had fallen out to the furtherance of the Gospel.* 3. That Truth is a gainer by our saddest sufferings, is sufficient reason for contentment under them: for, *Paul* reflecteth satisfied, and would have others satisfied also with this, That all his sufferings *had fallen out to the furtherance of the Gospel.* 4. The observing of the advantage that cometh to the Gospel by the suffering of the Saints for Christ's Truth, serveth greatly to remove the scandal of the crosse: for this end would the Apostle have them to understand that *what had befallen him, was for the furtherance of the Gospel.*

Verf. 13. So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the Palace, and in all other places.

He giveth two evidences, that advantage had come to the Gospel by his sufferings: First, his bonds, or the Gospel which was the cause of his bonds, was made famous in Nero's Court, and elf-where, whileas every one almost, enquiring after the cause of his sufferings, did learn something of Christ and the Gospel by that mean. *Diss. 2.*

That

That the Gospel getteth entry in the Houses of Kings and great men, is a great advantage and furtherance to it: for, this he reckoneth as one advantage, even that the Gospel by his bonds was manifest in all the Palace. 2. An occasional report, and general fame of Christ and the Gospel, may, through the blessing of God accompanying it, take some by the Heart, to whom that report doth come: for, by the very occasional mentioning of the Gospel, as the cause of Paul's sufferings, some were made to enquire and learn so much of it, as made them fall in love with it: else he would not have thought the manifesting of his bonds had tended to the furtherance of the Gospel.

Ver. 14. *And many of the Brethren in the Lord waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the Word without fear.*

A second evidence, is, That contrary to the expectation of enemies, (who concluded that Paul one of the chief Apostles being put in bonds at Rome, no Minister should have the courage ever to preach again) many Ministers of Jesus Christ, having heard of his constancy under sufferings, were encouraged to shake off fear, and preach Christ more boldly than ever. *Doff. 1.* The Gospel, and glad tydings of Salvation through Jesus Christ, is the most excellent word that ever sounded in a lost sinners ear: Therefore, it is called, *The Word*, by way of excellency, as if there were no other word besides worthy of the name. 2. This tendeth much to the furtherance of the Gospel, when Preachers of it are men of courage, not fearing their own personal sufferings, if so they may get Christ advanced, and the Gospel published: for, this is given as an evidence of the furtherance of the Gospel, even their speaking of the Word without fear. 3. The observation of God's upholding others under sharp sufferings, should make us courageous in avowing that Truth for which they suffer; as knowing, God who helped

helped them, will not be inlacking to us, if we be put to suffer for the same cause: for, *the Brethren in the Lord waxed confident by his bonds.* 4. As among all Christians, so chiefly among Ministers, there is a relation of fraternity in Christ, whereby they are tied to walk as Brethren; by loving one another, 1 John 4. 21. admonishing one another, Lev. 19. 17. standing for the just credit one of another, Jam. 4. 11. and working to the hand one of another, for carrying on the work of their Lord Christ, 2 Cor. 6. 1. Hence they are called, *Brethren in the Lord.*

Verf. 15. *Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife, and some also of good will.*

16. *The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to adde affliction to my bonds:*

17. *But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the Gospel.*

Because it might have been objected, That many of those fore-mentioned Preachers, of whom he boasted, were but naughty men, and small friends to Paul; He answereth, first, granting, many indeed did preach Christ from a spirit of envy against Paul, to out-strip him, and of contention and strife, hereby raising a sinful emulation amongst the Ministry, while every one laboured who should have maniest to applaud him, and from a malicious purpose and desire to procure harder usage for Paul, if not his death, being now in bonds; supposing, the more the Gospel was preached, Nero would be the more incensed against him: Yet herein he comforted himself, that all the Preachers were not of that stamp, there being many besides them, who preached Christ from love, and good-will toward Christ, and Paul his prisoner, aiming sincerely at the good of the Gospel; for the defence whereof, he was now in bonds. *Verse. 1.* They may preach Christ unto others, who are but hollow-hearted men themselves: for, so were those who preached Christ, even of envy and strife. 2. Such is the power

power of unmortified corruption, that it will make a mans most excellent gifts, and the exercise of them in the choicest duties of divine worship, subservient to his basest lusts: for, *some even preached Christ out of envy and strife.* 3. The Lord taketh notice, not only of the matter which Ministers do preach, whether it be Truth or Error; but also, of the manner how, the ends for which, and the motives from which they preach: even whether they preach Christ *from envy and contention, or, from love and goodwill*: for, here Paul taketh notice of it. 4. An immoderate sinful desire after applause, together with the lust of envy because of the gifts and estimation of others, is a sin, whereof those who preach Christ are sometime guiltie: for, here *some preach Christ out of envy.* 5. The Ministers of Jesus Christ had need to resist the very first motions of the fore-mentioned evil; seeing, where it is once rooted in the heart, it will make a man prostitute his parts and gifts; yea, the very preaching of Christ, to the service of it: So those of whom the Text speaketh, having once given way to a spirit of sinful emulation against Paul, they rest not, until they even *preach Christ out of envy.* 6. Where there are self-seeking men in the Ministry, making a trade of their excellent preaching and other exercises of their gifts and parts, (mainly to get themselves much thought of, and others vilipended) unity cannot long continue in the Church of Christ: but, such spirits, before they fail of their intent, will rather trample upon the Churches peace: for, those two are conjoynded, they *preached Christ out of envy and strife.* 7. Though a man preach Truth, and exalt Christ in preaching Truth; yet if he do it from a spirit of envy, to get others decayed, and himself extolled, he is but an unsincere rotten-hearted hypocrite (notwithstanding of all his preaching) in Gods sight: for, those men preached Truth, else Paul (ver. 18.) would not have rejoiced in their preaching; yet, seeing they preached of envy, they are spoken of as unsincere, and unfaithful Preachers, who preached *not sincerely.* 8. Envy, and sinful emulation, because of the parts

parts and esteem of others. is a cruel and unsatiable lust, thirsting after the very blood of those against whom they have emulation; for those men who envied *Paul*, would gladly have added affliction to his bonds, and have stirred up *Nero*, by occasion of their preaching, to have taken his life. 9. Though some that preach Christ are but hollow-hearted men, yet all are not so; and the sincerity of those that are honest, is sufficient comfort against those discouragements which might arise from those who are otherwise: for, though some preached Christ out of envy; yet *Paul* comforted himself in this, that others preached of good-will. 10. This is praiseworthy in a Minister, when he is stirred up to preach from love to Truth, good will to the work, and to Christ whose work it is, endeavouring what in him lieth to encourage all, even the meanest who have their hand at the Work; for that is here commended, even to preach Christ of good will and love, to wit, love to Christ, to Truth, and unto *Paul*. 11. An honest heart will respect those much, whom love to Truth hath brought to any suffering, or hardship; for, therefore did those honest Ministers preach from good will unto *Paul*, knowing he was set, or, did lie (to wit, in prison) for the defence of the Gospel. 12. The sufferings of the Saints for the Gospel, are real preachings, and are speaking apologies and defences for the power and truth of the Gospel: I am set (saith *Paul*) for an apologie of the Gospel, as the word is in the original.

Vers. 18. What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, —

He giveth a second answer unto that which might have been objected, to wit, Whatever they aimed at in their preaching, yet Jesus Christ was made known by them: and this made him glad. **Diss. 1.** The blessing of the Word preached, doth not depend upon the honesty and saving grace of the Preacher: A graceless Minister

sister may (through Gods blessing upon his own Truth) be an instrument of much good unto others: for, they who preached Christ in *pretence* only, pretending love to Christ, but really seeking their own applause, were surely doing good unto some: else Paul would never have rejoiced so much that Christ was preached by them. 2. The apparent diminution of our own esteem and credit ought not to be much regarded, if high esteem of Christ be upon the growing hand: Paul regarded it not; notwithstanding, saith he, that is, though they seek to overshadow me, yet Christ is preached, and I rejoice. 3. The man whose heart is inflamed with love to Christ's honour, and the salvation of lost sinners, so as not to value his own particular hazard, being put in the balance with those, may expect to find much joy and comfort under his saddest sufferings: for, Paul, being thus disposed, rejoiceth, though in bonds: *Libere in deo rejoice.*

Verf. — 18. *yea, and will rejoice.*

19. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

That he may yet further prevent their stumbling at his sufferings; he sheweth, That, as the Gospel had gained much thereby already, it should gain yet more; and that his joy in that respect should not be taken from him; and that, because he knew, partly from Scripture, and partly also, as it appeareth, from special revelation, that ~~this~~ to wit, all the machinations of his adversaries against him, should be so ordered of God, as that by the renewed supply of furniture from the Spirit of Christ, obtained by their prayers, his salvation should be advanced by them; where by *salvation* we understand, not only his eternal well-being, but his constancy also in avowing Truth, and the preservation of his temporal life for the time, as he cleareth afterwards: the contrary of both which was aimed at by his envious brethren, their de-

sign being, as it seemeth, either to drive him through his own fear, unto apostacie from Christ, or otherwise to incite Nero to put him to death. *Dott. 1.* A suffering Christian, especially a Preacher, may attain, not only to present sweetnesse and joy under a bitter crosse; but also to a sweet strong perswasion of the continuance of that joy in the time to come: for, *Paul* not only rejoyceth in the mean time: but also confidently resolveth, *I will rejoyce.* 2. The joy of a Christian under a crosse is grounded, not only upon good presently enjoyed and felt, but also upon that, which by faith is apprehended as yet to come; so *Paul* rejoyceth, and promisseth to rejoyce, because he knew by faith, that *this should turn to his salvation.* 3. So powerfull and wise is God in working, that out of the eater he can bring meat, by ordering our sad afflictions so, that our salvation both temporal and eternal, shall be advanced thereby: thus was it with *Paul*; *I know that this shall turn to my salvation.* 4. That Christians are kept constant under sad sufferings, and made to advance in the way towards salvation thereby, proceedeth neither from the nature of the crosse, nor yet merely from the power of inherent grace; but chiefly from the actual influence and renewed supply of furniture from the Spirit of Christ: for, that *this* did turn to his salvation, was, *through the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.* 5. Prayer conscientiously gone about, is an excellent mean for drawing from God through Christ the choicest of his mercies, not only to our selves, but also to others, for whom we pray: So, *through the prayer* of those Philippians, *supply from Christ* was to be communicated to *Paul.* 6. They who pray best and most spiritually, are not most taken up with the conceit of their own prayers: for, *Paul* imputeth his receipes more to their prayers, than to his own; though none will question but he prayed as much, and as well as any of them: *through your prayers,* saith he.

Verſ. 40. *According to my earneſt expectation and my hope, that in nothing I ſhall be aſhamed; but that with all boldneſſe; and without ſhame, ſo now alſo Chriſt ſhall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.*

Paul's envious adverſaries aimed at two things; either to drive him to apoſtaſie, or to incite Nero to take his life; and in the preceding Verſe it is ſhown, that Paul knew they ſhould be diſappointed in both theſe: Now he explaineth his knowledg and perſwaſion of their diſappointment in the firſt, and ſheweth the ground of that perſwaſion. His perſwaſion had two parts; the Negative part is, No terror of fleſh ſhould ever make him deny the truth, as a man aſhamed of it. The Poſitive is, That he ſhould continue in the ſtout avowing of truth, and magnifying of Chriſt, whether he died or lived: The grounds of this his perſwaſion were, hope in Gods Word, his earneſt expectation, flowing from his hope and by-paſt experience. Doct. 1. To turn our back upon truth, for eſchewing of ſuffering, ſaith as much, as that we are aſhamed of Chriſt and his truth: and therefore they who do ſo, may expect that Chriſt will be aſhamed of them. See Luke 9. ver. 26. hence in place of ſaying, he will not deny truth in any thing, he ſaith, *in nothing I will be aſhamed.* 2. Chriſtians in the caſe of tryall eſpecially, would be very ſtrict and precise, ſo as not to recede from the leaſt point of truth or dutie. Thus the Apoſtle reſolveth, *I will be aſhamed in nothing.* 3. The firſt ſtep towards defection is, a declining of, and relenting in the profeſſing and bold avowing of truth, when God calleth us to it: and to avow truth boldly, as occaſion offereth, is a ſoveraigne mean to keep us from being aſhamed of it. For, Paul oppoſeth thoſe two, his being aſhamed of truth, and his bold avowing of it; the latter as preventive of the former: *in nothing I will be aſhamed; but that with all boldneſſe.* 4. The avowing of truth boldly under perſecution, tendeth much to the magnifying of Chriſt his truth, for which

we suffer; and his strength which beareth us up under sufferings, being thereby much commended: Hence he calleth his boldnesse for truth, under his bodily sufferings, a magnifying of Christ; *so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body.* 5. A Christian is not to hesitate much in the matter of his death or life, if so he may get Christ magnified by either of them; for, Paul standeth not much, if *so Christ be magnified, whether it be by death or life.* 6. The hope of a Christian, having a word of promise for its ground (*Psal. 130. ver. 5.*) shall never be disappointed: for, Paul concludeth all this should turn to his salvation, and that he should be carried through under sufferings, because there being a generall word of Promise for it, *Rom. 8. ver. 28.* he hoped in that word; *according to my hope,* saith he. 7. Then is our hope of the right stamp, and truly Christian, when being founded upon the Word, it exciteth the heart earnestly, and by all lawfull means to pursue after the thing hoped for; so the Apostles hope is joyned with *earnest expectation*: the word signifieth; the expectation of a thing with head and neck stretched out, as pressing to be at it. 8. The frequent experience of Gods being nigh unto us, and honouring of himself by us in former tryals, is a ground for hope to rest upon, that he will not leave us in the present strait; so Paul gathereth present confidence from former experience: *that as alwayes, so now also, &c.*

Verf. 21. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

He giveth a reason of his indifferencie, whether to die, or to live, of which he spake, ver. 20. to wit, if his life be prolonged, *unto him to live is Christ*, that is, Christ was to be the scope of his life, he having destinated it wholly to his service; but if he die, death should be gain and advantage to him. *Dost. 1.* Then, and in no other case, is poor silly life worth the having, when the extolling of Christ is the main scope at which we aim in our

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our life; For, this maketh Paul indifferent to live, or not to weary of life; for unto me to live is Christ, saith he. 2. Who ever hath dedicated his life to get Christ exalted by it, will find death it self to be great gain and advantage, as being thereby freed from sin and misery, Rev. 14. ver. 13. and admitted unto the full injoying of Christ 1. Cor. 13. ver. 12. unto all eternitie 1. Thess. 4. ver. 17. for, unto Paul to die is gain; because unto him to live was Christ.

Verf. 22. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose, I dot not.

He explaineth the first member of the preceding verse, shewing, if he should live any longer in this corruptible flesh, *this* or that life should be the *fruit of his labour*, that is, the gaining of souls to God by his labour, should be the scope of his life: and then declareth his former indifferencie to be such, that he knew not whether to choose death or life, though it were given him to his option. *Doff. 1.* The manifold infirmities accompanying this mortall fading life, do not impede the labour of Gods faithfull servants from being fruitfull, in order to the honour of Christ, and good of the Church; the wisdom of God judging it most convenient to commit this heavenly treasure to earthly vessels, and to bring about the great work of saving of souls, not by sinlesse, holy, and uncorruptible Angels, but by poor weak men, who carry about fading flesh as our selves, 2. Cor. 4. ver. 7.) So if Paul had lived in the flesh, his labours should have had fruit that way: *if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour.* 2. Who ever knoweth ought of a life to come, and of a right unto it, cannot but speak contemptibly of the life which now is, while he compareth the one with the other; so Paul, as concerning this life, being compared with that, calleth it, *a living in the flesh*, 3. A man may be so perswaded of a life of glory after death, upon the one hand, and so convinced of

the great advantage, which may come to the Church by the prolonging of his life, upon the other hand, that if to die or live, were given to his wish, he could not easily determine himself, which of them to choose: So is it with Paul; *what I shall choose, I wot not*, saith he.

Verſ. 23. *For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better:*

24. *Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh, is more needful for you.*

He professeth his strait, shewing there were weighty reasons on both sides: When he looked on death, therein he saw his own particular advantage, even to be still with Christ; when he looked upon life, therein he saw advantage to the Church, and hence ariseth his strait what to choose, or refuse. *Doct. 1.* Death is not a destruction of the godly, but a separating of the soul from the body, a sitting from one place to another, a releasing of the soul from the captivity of the body, wherein it was inclosed, and a setting of it at liberty: for, Paul maketh use of a word to expresse death, rendred here to *depart*, which signifieth to dissolve things before conjoyned, to change our abode, or, our dwelling, to set sail for another Country, and to be released from prison. 2. It is lawfull, yea and in some respects a duty for Christians, not only frequently to think upon death, but also to long after it; for, *Paul hath a desire to depart*. 3. Then is our longing after death commendable, when it proceedeth not from desperation; or wearying of the crosse which God hath laid on (*Jonab* 4. 3, 4.) but from a desire to be with Christ: for, here those are conjoyned. *I desire to depart and to be with Christ*. 4. The souls of men and women are not annihilated after death, neither do they sleep until the Resurrection; nor are they detained by the way from immediate passing into glory, if they have been Believers, as the souls of others do enter into everlasting condemnation: for, *Paul knew nothing of a Pur-*
gatory

gatory after death; but he expected presently *to be with Christ*. 5. There is, no proportion betwixt the choicest contentments (even those that are spiritual) which can be attained here, and that exceeding weight of glory which the Saints shall enjoy hereafter, the latter doth so far exceed the former: for, *to be with Christ*, saith Paul, *is far better*. 6. Though Christ be present with, and dwell in the hearts of Believers by faith, even while they are here, *Eph. 3. 17.* yet all that presence and nearness, is but a distance and kind of absence, being compared with that measure of nearness to, and presence with him, which shall be enjoyed hereafter; the former being but mediate, through the glasse of Ordinances, *1 Cor. 13. 12.* frequently interrupted, *Psal. 30. 7.* and no waies full, *1 Cor. 13. 12.* But the latter shall be immediate, *1 Cor. 13. 12.* constant, *1 Thess. 4. 17.* and so full, that they who shall enjoy the meanest degree, will finde no inlack, *Psal. 17. 15.* for, he saith after his departure, *he will be with Christ*, as if he had never enjoyed his presence until then. 7. The Church of Christ hath much advantage by injoying of faithful Ministers, and suffereth much by their removal; for, *my abiding in the flesh is needful for you*, saith Paul. 8. It is only the publick good of the Church, and others of whom we have charge, and not particular contentment which can be enjoyed here. that ought to cast the ballance of our affections towards a desire of having our life prolonged: for, only this hath weight with Paul, while he saith, *to abide is more needful for you*.

Verf. 25. *And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith.*

26. *That your rejoycing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me, by my coming to you again.*

Having shoven (ver. 20, &c.) that his adversaries should be disappointed of what they aimed at in the first place,

place, which was to drive him unto apostacie; he sheweth here they should be also disappointed of what they designed, in the next place, which was the inciting of Nero to take away his life: for, from what he hath presently said, how useful the continuance of his life should be to the Church of Christ, and withall having probably a special revelation of the thing, he expresseth at least his confidence (if not his certain perswasion,) that not only his life for this time should be preserved, but also, that being set at liberty, he should come and remain with them; and all this that they might be further promoted in the way to Heaven, especially in the grace of believing, ver. 25. and have more abundant matter of gloriation in Christ, having received a new proof of his power, and good will in delivering of Paul from death, and sending him unto them, ver. 26. *Dott. 1.* The Lord in mercy often prolongeth the life of useful instruments, and keepeth them from Heaven the longer, that the Church may reap advantage by their labours: So Paul was to abide and continue with them all. 2. A faithful Minister, though he be not tied to submit to the losse of Heaven and salvation; yet he ought contentedly to spare the enjoyment of it for a time, if so be his life may do good to the Church of God: for, Paul is content upon this accompt that his life be prolonged: *having this confidence, I know I shall abide.* 3. God alwaies can, and sometimes doth so calm the rage of persecutors, that they do not execute the evil by them intended against his Servants, whom he still preserveth and doth deliver from death and bonds, so long as he hath work for them: for, saith Paul, *having this confidence, I know, &c.* His confidence, that he should be delivered, doth import, that God may deliver when he pleaseth, and that at least, considering the present posture of affairs, it was very probable that he should be delivered: If it do not also import a certainty of faith, grounded upon some particular revelation, that it should be so: for, the word most frequently signifieth an assured confidence. See 2 Tim. 4. ver. 16, 17, 18. Where Paul doth seem

to insinuate, that after his first captivity and compar-
 ance before Nero, he was set at liberty, and did preach
 the Gospel among the Gentiles; though he was after-
 ward apprehended and put to death. 4. They who have
 received a great measure of gifts and graces, and have
 the opportunity of enjoying the fellowship of others,
 should improve their time and parts, in their place and
 station, for the spiritual advantage of those with whom
 they converse: for, so doth Paul look on his continuance
 with them, that it should be for *their furtherance*. 5. As
 there is no grace, wherein Christians ought not to aim at
 progresse and growth, 1 Pet. 3. 18. So, especially, they
 would labour to grow in faith, as being that grace,
 which by its growth, is cause of growth in all other gra-
 ces; it is the mouth which sucketh the milk of the Pro-
 mises: and therefore Satan obstructeth our growth in
 that grace most, Luk. 22. 31, 32. Hence the Apostle would
 aim at their growing in this grace especially: *for your
 furtherance and joy of faith*, saith he. 6. As there is a joy
 of sense, Job. 16. 24. So there is a joy arising from the
 solid satisfaction which the heart doth receive from lay-
 ing hold on Christ and the Promise, Psal. 60. 6. which
 is here called the *joy of faith*. 7. The several instances
 of Christs kything his power and good will in the deli-
 very of his Church, or of any particular member thereof
 from a desperate strait, should be improved for streng-
 thening of our faith, and increase of holy boasting and
 gloriation in God: for, Paul sheweth the fruit of his
 deliverance *(should be the furtherance of their faith, and that
 their rejoicing might be more abundantly in Jesus Christ for
 him)*; that is, because of Christs power and good will to
 them, manifested in his delivery. 8. Where there is sym-
 pathy with Christian sufferers under their crosse, there
 will be a sharing with them also in all the choice advan-
 tages, which are to be obtained by their delivery: for,
 the Philippians did partake with Paul in his bonds, v. 7.
 and as a fruit hereof, they are to reap much spiritual ad-
 vantage by his delivery from them: *that your rejoicing
 may*

may be more abundantly, &c. saith he: 9. The more unexpected mercies are, before they come, the more of God will be seen in them, and the more of joy in God will be because of them, when they come: for, Paul was a good man in humane appearance, being prisoner at Rome, and his delivery almost hopelesse, and therefore their rejoycing was to be the more abundant in Jesus Christ by his coming to them again.

Verf. 27. *Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may bear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel.*

In the third part of the Chapter, he exhorteth them, That whatsoever should befall him, they would minde their duty, by living like the Gospel: which general exhortation he brancheth forth in two Branches: first, That they would maintain Truth with perfect Unity among themselves in the joynt defence of it, which should be great matter of joy unto him, whether he should come and see it, or only hear of it, being absent. Doct. 1. There is nothing concerneth Christians wherewith they should be taken up so much, as how to beautifie the Gospel which they professe, by a holy conversation suitable unto it: for this is the only thing he would have them minding; and that more than any thing which concerned him; *Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel.* 2. As there is nothing which gladdeth a faithful Minister more than the holy life of those that are committed unto his charge: So the joy and contentment of an honest Minister, should be conscientiously sought after by the people: for, he useth this as an argument to incite them to walk as becometh the Gospel, that his hearing, or seeing of it, would make him glad, *that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may bear of your affairs:* which words do not necessarily import his doubt-

doubtful of his coming, contrary to what he seemeth to speak, ver. 25. he onely hereby sheweth. 1. that they were not so much to be taken up with that, whether he came or not, as with their own duty. Secondly, how much their living like the Gospel would refresh him, so that although he should be deprived of that comfort, which he was confident to enjoy in their fellowship, yet to hear of their Christian conversation, would refresh his spirit under that want. *Doct. 3.* This is one part of a conversation becoming the Gospel, to be zealous for truth, standing to, and striving for the defence thereof against error, and unstability in truth, which reflect as much on the Gospel as profaniry of life: for Paul explaineth this conversation, which becometh the Gospel, by a *standing fast, and striving for the faith of the Gospel*; that is, for the doctrine of faith held forth in the Gospel. 4. It concerneth Gods people much, to be thoroughly one among themselves in this conflict for truth against error: therefore doth he presse them so much to be one, while he saith *but ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together*; where every word expresseth a part of this unity, to wit, union in spirit, or judgment and opinion; union in mind or affection; and union in design and endeavour, while they strive together.

Verf. 28. *And in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition; but to you of salvation; and that of God.*

The second branch of living like the Gospel (which also explaineth the first) is a spirit of courage under sufferings from the enemies of truth, which he presseth from the consideration of two things, which they might read in their couragious sufferings, to wit, namely, that their so doing, portended destruction to enemies, and salvation to themselves. *Doct. 1.* As the people of God have alwayes some to be their adversaries for truth; so they may attain to such a high pitch of courage, that the utmost of adversaries malice and rage, will not terrifie them, to

wit,

wit, so as to drive them from their duty, or to make them take any sinfull course for their own safety, *Nehem. 6. ver. 11.* Therefore are they exhorted to it, as a thing attainable, that they be *in nothing terrified.* 2. Faithlesse fears and faintings of spirit, because of the boasts and threats of adversaries, are exceedingly unsutable for those who live under the Gospel: for this is one part of that conversation, which becometh the Gospel, to be *in nothing terrified by adversaries.* 3. The more of sufferings for truth the people of God are made to under-go, and the more there be of Christian courage, and holy contempt of enemies rage and boasts under sufferings, there is the more evidence of delivery unto the Church, and of ruine here and hereafter to her enemies, *which is to them an evident token of perdition.* 4. Christian courage under sufferings for Christ and his truth (which alwayes pre-supposeth faith in Christ, *ver. 29.*) though it be not meritorious of heaven; yet it evidenceth our right unto it; *but to you of salvation.* 5. It is of Gods free grace, and from his speciall disposing, that crosses and sufferings for truth (which in themselves look like displeasure and wrath from the Lord) should contribute any thing unto the salvation of the sufferer, or be a promising evidence of it: this much is meant by the last words, *and that of God.*

Verf. 29. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not onely to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.

Here is another argument exciting them unto Christian courage under sufferings for truth, to wit. That nothing was required of them, but what was given unto them: for, as grace to believe in Christ, so grace to suffer courageously for Christ, was a part of Christs purchase for them, and for his sake to be gifted over unto them. *Doct. 1.* To believe in Jesus Christ, or to suffer christianly for him, goeth beyond the reach of naturall strength. It is an honourable gift, and that freely given;

given; for it is given unto you to believe, and suffer, saith he, 2. All favour, especially saving graces, are given unto us in behalf of Christ, as being purchased for us by his merit; *1st. 53. ver. 5.* and applyed unto us through vertue of his intercession, *Heb. 7. ver. 25.* for, it is given in behalf of Christ. 3. Faith in Christ must go before Christian suffering for Christ: so that to suffer for him, is of greater importance, and in some respects more honourable, than simply to believe in him; for he not only saith, *it is given to believe*, in the first places; and then, *to suffer*; but there is a gradation in his speech from the lesse to the more; *not onely to believe, but also to suffer.* 4. This may encourage very cowards to be stout under Christian-sufferings, that grace to suffer, and all things necessary to make us suffer aright, are purchased unto our hand, and freely given unto us in behalf of Christ: for, this is the force of the Argument contained in this verse: *for unto you it is given, &c.* 5. Then are sufferings truly Christian, and an evidence of saluation, when as the sufferer is first a believer, so his sufferings are for Christs sake, that is, for his truth, as the cause for which *1. Pet. 3. ver. 14.* and from love to him, as the motive from which they suffer, *1. Cor. 13. 3. For his sake.*

Verf. 30. *Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now bear to he in me.*

He giveth a third reason to inforce the same duty, to wit, That their sharpest sufferings would put them in no other condition then that, wherein he himself was, as partly they saw when he was at Philippi; see *Act. 16. ver. 19, &c.* and partly they had heard by the relation of others since, *Mat. 1. Christian-courage* under sufferings for truth, will not be kept up without a battell and conflict; what from a fainting discouraged spirit within, *Heb. 12. 12.* what from the rage of persecutors, *Act. 9. 1.* and Gods hiding of his face without, *Psal. 44. ver. 24.* So Paul speaking of his sufferings, calleth

callecth them, an *agonie* or *conflict*: *having the same conflict*.
 2. The Lord may for wise reasons leave his most precious servants to wrestle under a suffering case for a long time together; for *Paul* was a sufferer at *Philippi*, and continueth to be so when he is at *Rome*, a long time after that: *what ye saw in me, and now bear to be in me*.
 3. This may adde no small incouragement under sufferings for truth, that nothing befalleth us, but what is common to men, yea, to the chiefest of Christs servants and Ministers: for, this is *Paul's* scope to incourage those *Philippians*; because he himself was in the same case with them: *Having the same conflict, which ye now bear to be in me*.

CHAP. II.

IN the first part of this Chapter, the Apostle exhorteth them with much vehemencie, to union and humillity, ver. 1, 2. And dissuadeth from contention and vainglory, ver. 3. and self-love, v. 4. First, from Christs example, v. 5. whose divine glory before his Incarnation is set forth, v. 6. his Incarnation and state of humiliation, v. 7, 8. and his exaltation, v. 9, 10, 11. Secondly, from their by-past obedience, v. 12, 13. After which he repeateth the dehoration, v. 14. inforcing it from the advantages which were to follow, v. 15, 16. the last whereof, to wit, his joy, ought in reason to have much weight with them, v. 17, 18.

In the second part he comforteth them; first, by a promise of sending *Timotheus*, v. 19. whom he commendeth unto them, to v. 24. Secondly, by the expression of his hope, that he himself should see them shortly, v. 24. And thirdly, by sending their own Minister *Epaphroditus* unto them presently, v. 25. and that upon severall weighty reasons, v. 26, 27, 28. from which he exhorteth them to receive him with all due respect, v. 29. and because he had with great pains attended him at their direction, v. 30.

Verf. 1. *If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comforts of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies;*

2. *Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

THE Apostle, being to presse unity and love, useth a most vehement exhortation, and a kind of rhetorical adjuration, That if they had ever found by the means of his Ministry, or did expect to find any of those consolations, which are to be had in Christ: If they had ever enjoyed, or expected to enjoy any comfort of mutual love and concord among themselves: If they had ever found any fellowship with God, by communication of influence from his Spirit, or, if they would not mar that fellowship for the time to come; If they had any pity or compassion upon him a prisoner for Christ; He obtesteth them by all those, and as they would give proof of all those, so they would compleat the begun joy which he had in them, by their unity and concord among themselves, which he setteth forth in four diverse expressions, to be distinguished thus. The first, *that ye be like-minded*, signifieth in general, their unity in judgment, love, affection, and action: which is sub-divided in the three particulars following. The second, *having the same love*, expresseth unity of will and mutual affections. The third, unity of design and endeavours. The fourth, unity in judgment and opinion. **Doct. 1.** The most famous, and praise-worthy Churches have their own failings and infirmities: So this Church, though highly commended, Chap. 1. yet hath had their own differences and alienation of minds, renting of affections, and carnal emulations flowing from their differences, as appeareth from this vehement exhortation to concord and unity. **2.** As unity and concord is necessary in it self, and at all times: (Hence the Apostle doth so earnestly presse them unto it.) So it is most necessary and comfortable, especially in suffering-times: Therefore the Apostle, having spoken

ken in the close of the former Chapter, of those sufferings which they were to undergo for Christ and Truth, inferred as a conclusion from thence this exhortation unto unity, *If there be therefore, &c.* 3. As they who have received any spiritual good from Jesus Christ, by the Ministerie of the Word, ought to have those in high respect, whom the Lord hath made instrumental for their good; and to evidence that respect unto them, chiefly, when they are in a suffering case: So the servants of Jesus Christ ought to improve any personal respect or weight which they have with people, for working of them up towards that, wherein their spiritual good doth consist: for, *Paul* obtesteth them by all that good, for the working whereof in them, his ministry had been instrumental; as also by that compassionate and tender respect which they did owe unto him, being now in bonds, that they would tender his joy and comfort; and chiefly that they would evidence their respect unto him, by seeking after unity and concord, which was more for their own good, then his; and is here mainly pressed after by him, the fulfilling of his joy being sought after onely as a mean to that end, and as an argument to perswade the thing pressed: *If there be any consolation in Christ &c. if any bowels and mercies; fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded,* saith he. 4. So necessary is unity and concord among the people of God, that the enjoyment of Christ's presence, and of spiritual consolation flowing from it; the reaping of any spirituall advantage, by the communion and love of the Saints; the entertaining of fellowship with God through the operation of his Spirit in us, do in a great part depend upon it: our own differences, eternal emulations, renting of affections, crosse and contrary actings, do in a great measure obstruct all those, by making Christ withdraw his presence, *2 Cor. 13. 11.* and one of us colderise and uselesse unto another, *Gal. 5. 15.* and by grieving the Spirit of God, *Eph. 4. 30.* compared with 31. Hence the Apostle obtesteth them by all those, that they would fulfill his joy, by being one among

among themselves; and so insinuateth a necessary connexion betwixt their unity, and enjoying of these things, while he saith; *If there be therefore, &c.* ver. 1. *Fulfil ye my joy, in being like-minded,* ver. 2. 3. The utmost endeavours of men and devils to sad the hearts of Christs, faithful servants, cannot altogether mar their joy: *Fulfil ye my joy,* saith he: which importeth he had some joy already. 6. The success of the Gospel among the Churches of Christ will be matter of joy unto a publick spirited Christian, even in the midst of all his particular crosses and sufferings: for, the fruits of the Gospel among these Philippians (spoken of) chap. 1. gave occasion to this begun joy unto Paul amidst his personal sufferings, which he doth here obtest them to fulfill: *Fulfil ye my joy.* 7. However a Church do otherwise flourish in gifts, graces and all kind of sympathy with Christian sufferers, (as this Church did, chap. 1. v. 6, 7.) yet so long as they live in strife and contention among themselves, they give not so much matter of joy unto a true lover of Jesus Christ by the former, but they give as much matter of grief by the latter: Hence he bids them *fulfil his joy, by being like-minded.* There would be alwaies a mixture of sadness, and defect in his joy, notwithstanding the many good things which they already had, if this were not. 8. That unity and concord among societies, and especially among the Churches of Christ, may be solid and lasting; there would be an union of will and affections, without laying them out on contrary and crosse objects; an union of designs and endeavours, without mutual counterminings; which followeth upon the former; and there would be an union in opinion and matter of judgment, as the fountain of the other two: this is it he presseth, first generally, *being like-minded*; and then particularly in the other three expressions, *having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

Vers. 3. Let nothing be done through strife, or vain-glory, but in lowlinesse of mind let each esteeme other better then themselves.

He dissuadeth them from two vices destructive to unity, to wit, contention and vain-glory; and exhorteth them to humiliey, or lowlinesse of minde, a grace, whereby a man thinketh meanly of himself, and highly of others. *Doct. 1.* A contentious spirit, which maketh it a man's element to differ from others, and to carry on his point, by out-wearying of others with jangling and strife, is a notable unfriend to unity, and so to be eschewed by all, who would be esteemed lovers of peace. Hence having exhorted them to union, he denoteth from *doing any thing through strife.* 2. The lust of vain-glory (whereby a man pursueth more after applause from men to himself, *Job. 12. ver. 43.* and to be esteemed of above others, *Job. ver. 29.* than the honour of God, or to be approved of him) is the mother of contention and strife, and a great unfriend to union and peace; it being a lust which carryeth along with it a spirit, which will not cede to truth, *Job. 5. v. 14.* together with an evident contempt of all others, being compared with the man himself; who is tainted with this evill, 2 *Chron. 18. ver. 23.* Hence he forbids adding from a principle of vainglory, as they would eschew strife, and so entertain union and peace: *let nothing be done through vain-glory.* 3. So ordinary is it for God to plague self-seeking spirits with disappointment, *Luke 14. ver. 11.* so unconstant and unchangeable is popular applause, *Job. 12. ver. 13.* compared with chap. 19. v. 15. and so little is there in any man to be puffed up with, 2 *Cor. 14. ver. 7.* that all glory of this kinde is but vain-glory, or, but emptie glory, as the word in the original doth bear. 4. The grace of humility, doth not consist in an affected strain of words and gestures, *Matth. 6. ver. 16.* but being seated in the heart, it maketh a man think meanly of himself; or, of any thing that is his: thus the word signifieth,

fieth, and is here rendered *lowliness of mind*. 5. Where this grace of humility is, it contributeth much for unity and peace, and is inconsistent with a carrying on of our point from a principle of vain glory, or through strife: for, he prescribeth humility as an antidote against those evils, and a sovereign mean for attaining unto, and entertaining of union and peace: but *through lowliness of mind*, &c. 6. So conscious should we be of our own infirmities, *1 Tim. 1. ver. 15.* so modest in the esteem of our own graces and virtues, *Rom. 12. ver. 3.* so far from prying into, or aggregating the infirmities of others, *Prov. 10. ver. 12.* so much should we esteem of their known graces and virtues, *Act. 17. ver. 8.* and so prone in charity to beleeve there may be much more good in them, then what appeareth, *1 Cor. 13. ver. 7.* that we ought to esteem any other, for what we know of him, to be better then our selves: for, *let each esteem others better then themselves*, saith he. 7. Where Christians are of the fore-mentioned temper, it speaketh true humility, and contributeth much for union and peace: for, the Apostle, having injoynd *lowliness of minde* in order to unity, injoyneeth the practice thereof in these terms, *let each esteem others better then themselves*.

Verf. 4. *Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*

He dehorteth from a third vice destructive also of union and peace, to wit, self-love, whereby we regard only our own honour and profit, wholly neglecting the concernments of others: He exhorteth also to the contrary virtue. *Doth. 1.* Self-love, or respect to our own things only, being joyned with contempt and misregard of the interest of others, is a great enemy to union and peace: for, while he presseth unity, he dehorteth from self-love; *looking not every man to his own things.* 2. The procuring, maintaining and advancing of our neighbours good estate, in his profit, honor, fame, and all

spirituall blessings, should beuimed at and endeavoured by us with the same accuracie and diligence, which we use in reference to our selves; and where Christians are of this temper, it contributeth much for union and peace: for these are *the things of others*, which he exhorteth every man also to look unto, or, accurately aim at, as one shooting at a mark: for so the word beareth. 3. A Christian is so to look upon the concernments of others, as not to neglect these things which concern himself: for he commandeth, *look also on the things of others; also, or, joyntly with your own things.*

Verf. 5. Let this minde be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

The Apostle presseth all the before-mentioned vertues from Christ's example, which he propoundeth here in generall for their imitation. *Dost. 1.* Christ's example in these things which concern our duty, is a most excellent, *Matth. 1. 1. 29.* unerring, *1 Cor. 11. 1.* and effectuall patern, *2 Cor. 3. 8.* to be imitated by those who profess themselves to be his; *Let the same minde be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.* 2. This should commend a grace, or, vertue unto us, and make it lovely, that Jesus Christ by his practice, hath given to us a patern of it: for, the Apostle presseth these vertues, because they were eminently to be seen in Christ; *Let the same minde be in you &c.* 3. Exemplary humility, tender respect to the concernments of believers, with a most earnest desire after the Churches peace, both with God, and amongst believers themselves, were eminently to be seen in Christ: for, he saith, *this minde* (to wit, that humble, loyng, uniting and modest minde, whereof he spake in the preceding verses) *was also in Christ.*

Verf. 6. Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equall with God:

7. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form

form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.

8. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the crosse.

He enlargeth and explicateth the example proposed, to this sense, That Jesus Christ before his incarnation, being true God, cloathed with divine Majestie, and so in all things equall with God the Father, ver. 6. did nevertheless hide his glory, assuming to himself the nature of man, with all the sinlesse infirmities thereof; so that, sin only excepted, he was in all things like unto other men, v. 7. and being thus incarnate, and found by all who conversed with him, to have all the true properties of a reall man, he voluntarily submitted himself to under-go whatsoever was enjoined him by the Father, as necessary for the Redemption of mankind; in which obedience to the Father, he persevered even to the death; and in end did crown it by under-going the cursed death of the crosse, v. 8. Now, Christ did under-go all this for our good, and the making up of our peace with God, and one with another in God: So, here is in Christ great humility and condescension, and such respect unto the good of others, that in some sense he did prefer them unto himself; together with a most earnest desire after the Church's peace, which are the vertues pressed from Christ's example, by the Apostle upon these Philippians. *Dott. 1.* Jesus Christ had a being or subsistence before his Incarnation; *who being, or, subsisting,* which is spoken of him before his Incarnation. *2.* That being and subsistence which he then had, was truly divine: He was from all eternity true God, adorned with divine glory, splendour and majesty: see *Prov. 8. 22. 23. &c.* *Who being in the form of God:* by which of necessity must be understood the substantiall form, or, very divine Essence, as cloathed with divine glory and majesty, there being no accidents in God. *3.* Jesus Christ

is God equall with the Father, having the same divine Essence: for, the divine Names, divine Properties, Works and Worship, are ascribed unto him: See 1 *Joh.* 5. 20. *Joh.* 1. 24. *Joh.* 6. 40; and *Joh.* 5. 23. Thus he is said to be equall with God. 4. The divine Essence, glory and majesty, which Scripture doth ascribe unto Christ, do justly and naturally belong unto him, and is not usurped by him: for, *it is no robbery for him to be equall with God.* 5. The Father and the Son are one only God; it being impossible there should be two Gods, or any thing equall with God, which is not God himself: now, Christ is equall with God. 6. Jesus Christ, though having still the same divine Essence with the Father, yet was alwayes a distinct Person from him, even the second Person of the blessed Trinity; See 1 *Joh.* 5. 7. for equality is only in these things, which in some respect are distinct: and *he is equal with God.* 7. Then is ones abasement a vertue, and worthy to be imitated, when it is voluntarily under-taken for the glory of God and the good of others, and not when it is constrained, or only imposed upon us, as a just punishment for our self-exalting, or any other sin: Christ's humility propounded here for our imitation, was such, as is imported in the sense and scope of these words; *he thought it no robbery to be equall with God*: The drift whereof, is, to shew, that Christ, knowing himself to be the true God, and not to have usurped that divine honour, did willingly under-go that low condition, and was not constrained to it, as a punishment for usurping upon that, which was not his own by right, as the Devils were thrown down from Heaven because, as is commonly conceived, they would by robbery have usurped divine honour, or to be equall with God. 8. Jesus Christ, the Eternall Son of God, in the fulnesse of time, became man, and was incarnate; for so is meant by his becoming of no reputation, and taking on him the form of a servant. 9. It was Jesus Christ, the second Person in the Godhead, who did take on him the nature of man, and was incarnate; and not the

the Father, or the Holy Spirit: for, it is Jesus Christ here spoken of, *who took on him the form of a servant*: See Rom. 1. 4. 10. Jesus Christ, by his Incarnation and assuming the nature of man, did empty himself of that divine glory, splendour and majesty, which before he had: not by ceasing to be what he was, but by assuming something to himself, which before he was not, to wit, the humane nature: in which respect, as being now God-Man-Mediator, he is lesse than the Father, Job. 14. 28. under the infirmity of which nature, he did hide for a time his divine glory, so that very little of it did appear, and to some few only, Isa. 53. 2. *he became of no reputation*. In the Greek, it is, he emptied himself, 11. Such was the love of Christ unto lost sinners, Job. 15. 13. and to the glory of his own and his Fathers mercy, to be manifested in their salvation, Job. 17. 4. that willingly, and of his own accord, without any constraint (except that of love) he laid aside his glory, and became low and empty for their good: for, *he made himself of no reputation*. 12. Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Godhead, did assume to himself the true and reall nature of man, having the same essentiall properties with the natures of other men: for, *he took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likenesse of men*: which likenesse denoteth, not onely a similitude in outward shew and appearance, but in the very essentiall parts: See Gen. 1. 3. 13. Christ assumed to himself the humane nature, not as it shall be in glory, perfectly glorified; but as cloathed with sinlesse infirmities, even such as are in us the punishment of sin; and did dimitt himself to be one of the lowest condition of men: for, *he took upon him the form of a servant*, and not of a glorified Saint. 14. Though Jesus Christ did take upon him the whole nature of a man, consisting of a true body, Heb. 2. 14. and a reasonable soul, Matt. 26. 38. Yet he did not assume the person of a man; so as to be two Persons, one as God, another as Man: he is one Person still, the humane nature subsisting in the second Person of the Godhead: so, *he*

took to himself not a servant; but the form, or, nature of a servant, and he remaineth the same *be*, or, person, after incarnation, which he was before: *he took to himself*: See *Luk. 1. 35.* 15. Though there be but one Person in Christ; yet there are two distinct Natures, the Divine, and Humane, without confusion or mixture, every one reserving their own distinct properties: so he took on him the form of a servant; but did not change the form or nature of a servant, to the nature of God: See *Luk. 2. 52. Job. 3. 24. 25.* 16. The truth and reality of Christ's humane nature, was evidently known unto those who did converse with him, by the fashion and proportion of his body, and the whole strain of his carriage and actions, they being such as are in, and use to be gone about by other men: for, so much is meant by his *being found in fashion as a man.* 17. Jesus Christ, though God equall with the Father, and so above all Law given unto men, yet being incarnate, did take upon him the yoke of obedience unto the Father's will revealed in the Law; that by the obedience of one, many might be made righteous: see *Rom. 5. 19. And became obedient unto death*; where his death is spoken of, as the term of his obedience, or, as but one part of it at most, the rest consisting in his performance of what the Law, both Morall and Ceremoniall did require, and is commonly called, his Active Obedience: see *Matth. 3. 15.* 18. So great is the guilt of sin, *Deut. 27. 26.* so strict is that obligation, to under-go eternall wrath, which lyeth upon us for sin, *Matth. 5. 18.* that no lesse could pay our ransom, and satisfie provoked justice, than the shamefull, painfull and cursed death of the Son of God: for, in order to our Redemption, he behoved to be obedient unto death, even the death of the crosse. 19. Such was the love both of the Father, *Job. 3. 16.* and of the Son, *Job. 15. 13.* to man's salvation, that for bringing it about, the Father appointeth the Son to die; and the Son willingly became obedient to the Father, even to death.

Verf. 9. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name :

10. That at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth :

11. And that every tongue should confest, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The Apostle prosecutes this argument taken from Christs example, shewing, That seeing Christ did humble himself so low, God hath exalted him highly, to wit, in his resurrection, 1 Cor. 15. 4. ascension, Mark 16. 19. and placing the man Christ at his right hand, Ephes. 1. 20. and hath made that divine glory of his which was hid in the daies of his humiliation, shine forth, by making it manifest, That whole crucified Christ, God and man in one person, is the only begotten son of God : this is the Name above every name, ver. 9. The ends of bestowing of this high honour upon Christ, were, first, That all reatonable creatures in heaven, earth, or hell, might adore and worship him as true God, to wit, some willingly, as the Elect ; others by constraint, as the Reprobate shall do, when made to stand at the Tribunal of Christ the Judge, to receive their doom, ver. 10. The second end is, That all these creatures may not only sub-
ject themselves unto him, but also be made openly to pro-
fesse this crucified Jesus to be that which he is, even
J E H O V A H, Lord of all things, the only begotten Son
of God : all which glory to be bestowed on the Son,
should detract nothing from the glory of the Father, but
adde unto it, ver. 11. Doct. 1. Whosoever is willing,
for the glory of God and good of others, to part with
his own credit, when he is called to it, may expect from
the Lord to have his losse and suffering in that richly re-
compenced : So was it with Christ, *he humbled himself,*
and was obedient, and therefore God highly exalted him. And
it is the very scope of the Apostle hereby to excite the
Philip,

Philippians to humility, and self-abasing for the good of others: because, as Christ after his humiliation was exalted, so might they expect to be exalted also in their own kind. 2. The Lord Christ having abased himself to the lowest degree of misery, which he engaged to undergo for our Redemption, was afterwards (and that by virtue of the Covenant of Redemption, see *Isa. 53. 10.*) exalted by the Father, to the highest pitch of divine glory: so he maketh his exaltation depend upon his humiliation, the one as the necessary consequence of the other; *wherefore God also highly exalted him.* 3. Through virtue of the personal union betwixt the divine and humane nature in Christ, those things which are proper only to the one nature, are ascribed unto and spoken of the whole person: So here, though somewhat of this high honour, bestowed on Christ in his exaltation, be verified only in the divine nature, to wit, in so far as this exaltation speaketh the manifestation of divine glory and majesty, which was before hid: and though somewhat of it be verified only in the human nature, in so far, as it includeth his resurrection and ascension; yet the whole of it is ascribed unto the whole person: for, he *exalted him*, to wit, the person God-man; and *best gave him a name*: So that divine glory and majesty, though it be not in the humane nature, yet is, and doth shine forth in that person, which is man; and though not the Godhead, yet the person, who is God, did rise from the death, and ascend from earth to heaven. 4. As the giving unto Christ a name, which is above every name, doth prove him to be true God, enjoying honour and majesty truly divine: for, what else can be meant, *by a Name above every name*? So, the bowing of every knee unto him, as of right belonging unto him, doth evince the same truth: for, hereby is intended that divine honour, due to God only, should be given unto him, as appears from *Isa. 45. 23.* compared with *Rom. 14. 10, 11.* 5. This Name, which is above every name, or, the Divine Nature, Divine Properties, Majestic and Splendor truly divine, is said to be given unto Christ, not, as if in the dayes

dayes of his humiliation he had not been God ; or, as if the humane nature after the resurrection had been indued with the divine properties ; but because his divine majestie, before hid, was now manifested, and the humane nature so highly honoured, that though it be not changed into the divine ; yet that person who is man, is true God, and was so to be acknowledged as such. 6. The worship and honour due to God, though it consisteth mainly in the inward affections of faith, love, fear and joy, *Joh. 4. 24.* yet it doth not exclude the manifestation of these affections by the outward gestures of the body, such as *bowing of the knee,* and *confessing with the mouth.* 7. External in worship are no infallible discriminating evidences of these who have true grace, from those who have it not : for here, at the Name of Jesus *every knee shall bow,* both of Elect & Reprobate ; and *every tongue shall confess.* 8. The disgrace, contempt and reproach which Jesus Christ did meet with when he was here upon earth, do contribute much for making his glory illustrious now : therefore he saith not *at that Name which is above every name*, but, *at the Name of JESUS* (which before his resurrection was contemptible, and almost execrable) *every knee shall bow.* 9. However a small part of the world onely doth acknowledge Christ to be God and Lord, being compared with those who acknowledge him not ; yet his glory shall be still upon the growing hand, untill all reasonable creatures in Heaven, Earth, or Hell, subject themselves unto him, and acknowledge him to be the only begotten Son of God : for, *to him every knee shall bow, & every tongue shall confess, whether of things in heaven,* as Angels, and the Souls of them who sleep in the Lord ; *or things on earth,* as Men yet alive ; *or things under the earth,* as Devils and damned souls : For, though Angels and Spirits have neither corporal knees, nor fleshly tongues ; yet they have some means whereby they are bound, and shall, whether they will or not, expresse and testify their subjection to our Lord and Saviour : All which shall have its full accomplishment at the last day, when

when Devils and damned men shall be made to stand at the Tribunal of Christ to receive their doom: see *Rom. 14. 11.* 10. To bow the knee, and uncover the head at the pronunciation of the syllables of the name *Jesus*, is but a superstitious custom and will-worship, having no warrant from this Scripture: for, by the name of *JESUS*, is not to be understood the naked syllables, sound, and letters of that word, but the glory and majesty of the Lord Christ: who (notwithstanding of that reproach which he did meet with in the dayes of his flesh) shall one day be acknowledged by all; otherwise if the letter of the words be precisely stuck to: how shall Angels and Spirits bow the knee, who have none? 11. As the giving of divine honour to Christ doth no way impair the glory of God the Father: so, whoever detracteth any thing from the honour of God the Son (as those Hereticks do, who deny his Godhead) they in so far detract from the glory of God the Father: for the bowing of the knee, and confessing with the tongue, that *Jesus is the Lord, is to the glory of God the Father.*

Verf. 12. Wherefore my beloved, as you have alwayes obeyed; not as in my presence only; but now much more in my absence; work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

The Apostle, from this excellent example of Christ, so sweetly enlarged, and by a new argument taken from their by-past obedience, when he was present with them, pressed, and enlargeth the former exhortation, exciting them to make constant progresse in the way of salvation, and that with fear and trembling: whereby he dehortheth them from secularity, pride and presumption, vices opposite to these vertues of modesty and humility, which from the beginning of the chapter he hath been pressing in order to union. *Doct. 1.* Then do we take a right view of Christ's most excellent example: when the beholding of him maketh us walk like him, by imitating him in those vertues, which were eminently in him: so *Paul*, having

enlarged

enlarged the example of Christ, exciteth them to the imitation thereof; *Wherefore my beloved*, saith he. 2. A Minister may, and in some respects ought to commend the People of God committed to his charge, for their willing obedience unto the Word of the Lord from his mouth; yea, and make known even to themselves the good esteem he hath of them: so doth the Apostle here, *as ye have alwayes obeyed*, saith he. 3. Whatever approbation one Christian receiveth from another, or from their judicious discerning Minister, it should be made use of as a spur to excite to further diligence; and is not to be rested upon, as if having it we had enough: for so the Apostle commandeth, *as ye have alwayes obeyed, now much more work out, &c.* 4. The lesse we have of outward excitements to our duty, and the more of discouragements to drive us from it, we ought to be the more intent upon it; as hereby giving evidence of our sincerity, that what we do, floweth not meerly from outward principles, but from inward respect and love to that which is commanded: so the Apostle bids them, *now much more obey in his absence*, when he was not present to excite them to go forward; and many seducers were now discovered to draw them backward, that hereby they might evidence the sincerity of that obedience which they gave unto him when he was with them present, as not being eye-service unto *Paul*, but from respect to the command of an omnipresent God. 5. In times of schisms and heart-divisions, it is too ordinary for people to be taken up with trifles, neglecting those things wherein their salvation is most concerned: his pressing of them *to work out their own salvation*, importeth, that through their divisions this work was much neglected. 6. If people were employed as they ought about that great work, how to get their own souls saved, they would be lesse in Church-renting, and dividing one from another for matters of smaller importance: therefore he presseth them *to work out their own salvation*, that he may hereby divert them from their contention and strife. 7. Heaven

is not to be expected by the lazy and negligent, or such as draw back: There must be a *working*, and a *working of it out*: whereby is meant, the imploying of all our abilities and endeavours, to practise all those means that God hath appointed for the accomplishment of our salvation, *Luke 13. 24.* and a constant continuance in the practice of them, until heaven and salvation be actually bestowed, *Matth. 24. 13.* This is to *work out our salvation*: and so the word signifieth to carry on a thing begun to its full end. 8. However Scripture doth condemn that fear in Believers, which causeth diffidence, doubting and despair, *Matth. 8. 26.* yet there is a fear opposite to carnal security, and to presuming on our own strength, which carryeth along with it a solicitous care about, and diligence in every thing which is our duty, *Psal. 15. 7.* together with humility and diffidence in our selves, *Rom. 11. 30.* This is a fear and trembling which is lawful and here commanded, as most necessary for carrying on the begun work of salvation unto a perfect close: *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*

Vers. 13. For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

He gives a reason why they ought to work with fear and trembling, holding off the extreams of lazy security, and carnal confidence: because the beginning, progresse and accomplishment of every good work is from God working freely; and therefore they were not through security to neglect the motions of his Spirit in them to good; nor yet be puffed up with conceit of their own strength. *Dist. 1.* The very first motions unto and beginnings of any thing which is spiritually good, are the work of Gods grace: for, *he worketh in us, not only to do, but also to will*, and that by infusing into the soul a power to will that which is good; and by actuating that power, making us actually to will: So, he not only giveth new supernatural faculties, but also the use and exercise of them.

them. 2. Though the first motions and beginnings of that which is spiritually good be wholly from God; yet he doth not constrain, or by force necessitate the will unto it, but by his omnipotent power he moveth sweetly, and worketh effectually upon the will, so that he maketh it willing to will that good which is by him intended: *he worketh in us to will.* 3. The natural faculties and powers of the soul, are not made uselesse by grace, as if they were laid aside to do nothing, the grace of God in us in the mean time doing all things; The will of man is indeed renewed by grace, and the will being thus renewed, doth also work: for, he *worketh in us to will*: we do will, being wrought upon by God. 4. The operation of Gods Spirit in working grace, is more than naked moral swasion, which consists only in propounding of the object, and holding forth inducing considerations to make the will close with that object, there being still an indifferency left to man's free-will to accept or refuse, as liketh him best: There is besides this a real influence from the Spirit of the Lord upon the will; a pull of omnipotent power, whereby the will is moved infallibly, and certainly to close with the object: for, *he worketh to will*, and so determineth the will. 5. Not only are the first principles of, and motions unto that which is spiritually good from the influence of Gods grace; but also the flowing forth of these motions, and acting according to these gracious principles, doth flow from the same free grace of God working powerfully in us: for, as he *worketh to will*, so also *to do.* 6. This powerful work of God, wheteby he worketh the beginnings, increase, and accomplishments of grace in us, is altogether free, flowing from his good will and pleasure, and is not merited by any thing wrought by us, *Rom. 11. 35.* His giving of more grace, is not merited by our use-making of the first grace, *Jan. 4. 6.* nor yet the first grace by the right use of our natural parts, *Eph. 2. 1.* for, he *worketh of his good will and pleasure.* 7. Though Christians be exhorted to the diligent performance of all commanded

duties; yet this impedeth not, but the beginning, progresse, and accomplishment of every work spiritually good, is wholly from God; for, exhortations shew what we ought, but not what we are able to do: hence, though they are commanded, ver. 12. *to work out their own salvation*; yet, it is affirmed here, *it is God who worketh*. 8. To ascribe, with Scripture, the whole work of grace in us, to God as the author; is a strong engine to batter down all confidence in our own strength, and to shake off carnal security, and stir us up to diligence: so far is it from rendering men lazie and secure: for having exhorted them to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, and so to shake off security and self-confidence, he giveth this as a reason, *It is God that worketh in you, &c.*

Ver. 14. *Do all things without murmurings, and disputings.*

He repeateth his dehortation from dissention and discord; setting forth divisions by their two usual and bitter fruits; to wit, private backbitings, and publick contentions or strife. Doct. 1. Private backbitings, secret whisperings, and venting of mutual mistakes to the prejudice one of another, as they are unseemly among Christians; so they are the ordinary fruits of division and discord in the Church: for, these are the *murmurings* from which he dehorteth. 2. Publick fruitlesse contests, hot debates, bitter reflections, are in like manner unseemly among Christians, and another ordinary fruit of division and discord: for, these are the *disputings* here spoken of.

Ver. 15. *That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.*
16. *Holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoyce in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.*

He presseth obedience to the former exhortation, because of the many and great advantages following hereupon; namely, That hereby, as by one mean, they should attain to live. 1. so, as none could justly blame them. 2. so, as they should do no harm unto others. 3. so, as to enjoy convincing evidences of their sonship and adoption. 4. so, as to stop the mouths of a number of godlesse Pagans, by holding forth in their profession and practice the way to life revealed in the Gospel, that those poor Pagans, among whom they lived, might fall in love with it; and 5. so, as *Paul* might have matter of joy in their salvation by his Ministry at the day of judgment: Which advantages as they were to follow one upon another, so all of them would be promoted much by their unity and concord, and obstructed much by dissention and discord.

Doct. 1. Where a spirit of pride and contention, together with private whisperings and publick hot debates, falleth in upon a Church, it will be found hard for any, who is engaged in that strife, to carry himself so, but somewhat worthy of blame will escape him: for he maketh their living blamelesse, to be the fruit of doing all things without murmurings and disputings: *that ye may be blameless.*

2. It is no small difficulty also for any, who is so engaged, to watch over his own spirit with that circumspection and tendernesse, but he will upon some occasion be doing hurt unto others; either by admitting groundlesse reports, and entertaining jealousies of them, or speaking to their disadvantage himself; or not standing for their just credit, when they are reproachfully spoken of by others, or by bitter reflections, or some such like thing.

2 Cor. 12. 20. for he maketh harmlesse living a fruit of unity, *that ye may be harmless.* 3. Division and strife, together with the sinful effects which these produce in peoples spirits, do often grieve the Spirit, and darken these evidences of adoption and sonship, which Believers, being in a calm and peaceable temper of spirit, use to see most clearly: for, he maketh their being the sons of God, or the evidencing of their sonship, depend upon the

their doing all things without murmurings; *that ye may be the sons of God.* 4. There is nothing which maketh Atheists and enemies of the Gospel take more occasion to vomit out their spite and malice against it, and the professors of it, than the schisms and fodings, murmurings and backbitings, publick contests and bitter reflexions, which are among Christians themselves: for, he maketh the stopping of the mouths of godlesse Pagans to be a fruit of unity and peace within the Church: *that ye may be without rebuke, in the midst of a perverse nation.* 5. It seemeth good unto the Lord for wise reasons, at sometimes to measure out the lot of his precious servants among a multitude of godlesse prophane Atheists: for, those Philippians did live in the midst of a perverse nation. 6. It concerneth those, who are so disposed of, to walk the more circumspectly, that no occasion may be given to wicked men to wound the Gospel through their sides: for, so be enioyned, *that ye may be in the midst of a perverse nation, without rebuke.* 7. Whatever be a mans carriage otherwise for civility, policy, moral or natural parts; yet so long as he embraceth not the Gospel, but remaineth an enemy unto it, he is in Gods esteem but crooked, perverse, froward, and nothing worth: So, all who lived at Philippi, except the Christians, are here called, *a crooked and perverse nation*: though doubtlesse many of them did excell in natural and morall parts. 8. Then do we stop the mouths of enemies unto truth, when our conversation, for piety unto God, and righteousness unto our neighbour, is such, as may discover unto them their failings, and point out that good way wherein they ought to walk: for, he shews how we may be free of their rebukes, even when *we shine as lights in the world.* 9. There is a duty lying upon Christians, of thirsting after, and labouring to bring about the salvation of these among whom they live, though never so wicked and perverse: so, they were *to shine as lights*: and by their profession and practice, *to hold forth the word of life in their severall stations, even in the midst of a crooked*

and perverse nation. 10. Suitable practice joyned with profession, putteth such a majestic and splendour upon Truth, that every Christian walking orderly is the same to profane men, among whom they live in order to their conviction, and discovery of their sin, and pointing out the lovely beauty of the way of Holinesse; which the Sun and Moon is in the Firmament in order to the discovering of things hid by natural darkness: for, saith he, *ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth.* 11. There is no life worthy to be so called, being compared with the life of grace here, and of glory hereafter, *Gal. 2. 20.* there is no way of attaining this life, but by Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal, *Job. 17. 3.* and there is no way to know Christ but by the Gospel, *Rom. 1. 1, 3.* This is imported while the Gospel, which holdeth out Christ is called by way of excellency, *The Word of Life.* 12. The office of the Ministry, being faithfully gone about, is so painful, weighty, and full of labour, that it may take up any one man wholly, and will prove as wasting of his natural spirits, as any other employment which can be chosen: hence the Apostle expresseth his pains taken in the Ministry, by running in a race, and other strength-consuming exercises: for the word rendered *laboured*, signifieth exercises of that kind; *that I have not run, neither laboured.* 13. However, the pains of a faithful Minister will not be lost as to himself, and from the Lord, *Isa. 49. 4.* yet they may be in vain, as to the peoples profiting, and in regard of any comfort which he enjoyeth from the fruits of his labours upon them: this is here supposed as possible, while he saith, *that I have not run in vain.* 14. The glory which shall be put upon gracious souls in the day of judgment, will adde to the glory and joy of these faithful Ministers, by whose labours they were gained unto God: hence Paul exhorteth them to unity, to live blamelesse, without rebuke, shining as lights: *that, saith he, I may rejoyce in the day of Christ,*

Ver. 17. *Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoyce with you all.*
 18. *For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoyce with me.*

He sheweth the bringing about of his joy in the day of the Lord Jesus, ought to have weight with them; because of his earnest desire after their spirituall good: which was such, that if, as he had been instrumentall for bringing them to Christ, by faith in him, so his blood should be shed for confirmation of their faith, and sealing of his own ministry or *service*; his death upon that accompt should not be grievous, but joyous unto him, and that because it should tend to their advantage and joy: and therefore he bindeth it upon them, as their duty, to *joy and rejoyce with him*, that is, to do that which would tend to his comfort and joy; especially, that they would walk christianly, study humility, and live in concord and unity, which ver. 2. he called *the fulfilling of his joy*. *Dost. 1.* The sacrifices acceptable unto God, under the New Testament, next to that of Christ his offering up himself upon the crosse, *Heb. 9. 14.* are, when Christians being made to judge themselves, and so, as it were slain by the service and ministry of the Word, are charged to lay hold by faith on that sacrifice of Christ's, and offer up themselves wholly to be spent and wasted in his service, *Rom. 12. 1.* for, the Apostle here speaketh with allusion to the Leviticall sacrifices, making their faith, or giving themselves over to God in Christ by faith, the sacrifice, and his ministry or *service*, the sacrificing knife: by the means whereof, they were as it were killed and offered up, being made to die to their own righteousness and sinfull lusts, and to flee unto God in Christ by faith; *upon the sacrifice and service of your faith.*
 2. However persecuters, in shedding the blood of Gods People, for their adherence to truth and duty, do aim at no further, but to satisfie their own cruelty and rage,
Matth.

Maib. 14. 3. yet the Lord intendeth a more high and noble end, to wit, that hereby believers may be more confirmed in the faith of that truth for which they suffer: for, if *Paul* should be offered up by death, he fore-seeth that it would be upon the sacrifice of their faith: he speaketh, as was said, with allusion to the ancient way of sacrificing, where wine and oyl were poured out upon the meat-offering, that the sacrifice might be incire and compleat according to what the Law did prescribe, *Levit. 2. 7. 15.* so, the shedding of his blood, should tend to accomplish the spiritual sacrifice of their faith, they attaining thereby a strong confirmation to it: *If I be offered up, or, poured forth upon the sacrifice, &c.* 3. Ministers would preach nothing to God's people, but what they dare seal the truth of with their blood, if God call them to it: so *Paul* is ready to have his blood poured out upon the service of their faith, that is, for confirmation of his own Ministry, by means whereof, faith was wrought in them. 4. When God doth call a man to suffer, and maketh use of his sufferings for confirmation of any part of Gospel-truth, and for edifying the body of Christ, he ought to rejoyce in his Crosse, as if it were his Crown: so *Paul*, I joy and rejoyce. 5. The ardent zeal and affection, which we see in others, toward our salvation and spiritual good, should incite us to be as affectionate towards it our selves: so, from this, that *Paul* was so much taken up with their spirituall advantage, as to die for it, he presseth them to take part with him: *Wherefore, do ye also joy with me*, to wit, in that wherein he did rejoyce, which was in their Christian conversation, unity and concord among themselves.

Verf. 19. But I trust in the Lord Jesus, to send *Timothens* shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.

In the second part of the Chapter, the Apostle promi-

les, if the Lord Christ should so judge fitting, to send *Timotheus* unto them: and that not only for their good and advantage to be reaped by his labours, in composing their begun differences, and stopping the mouths of gain-sayers; but also for his own comfort, as hoping at *Timotheus*' return, to hear their affairs to be in a better posture, than they were for the present. *Doct. 1.* The presence and assistance sometimes of one man eminent for piety, parts and reputation, will prove so steadable to the Church, labouring under schisme and feared persecution, that the very intimation of a purpose to send such a one, will adde much spirit and courage unto those who are honest: therefore *Paul*, to keep them from fainting, maketh known his purpose to send *Timotheus*. *2.* All our promises and purposes, are to be undertaken with submission to the will of Christ, and grounded upon his power and strength (and not our own) for bringing of them unto timeous performance: so was *Paul's* purpose to send *Timotheus*: *I trust in the Lord Jesus to send*; whereby he doth not expresse a hope, or confidence of faith, but onely of charity and love to the Church's good, *1 Cor. 13. 7.* which made him hope that God would bring about that particular, which tended so much to their advantage, although he had no certain promise for it to build faith upon. *3.* The crosses and comforts of a Christian, indued with a truly publick spirit, depends not so much upon those things which are of particular concernment to himself, as those which are of publick concernment to Jesus Christ, and to his Church in the World: so *Paul's* comfort, though now in bonds, depended much upon the state of this Church at Philippi: *I may be of good comfort, when I know your state*, saith he.

Verf. 20 For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state.

He commendeth *Timotheus* from his affection towards them,

them, in so far, that he came not short of the Apostle himself, or at least, resembled him most in his sincerity and diligence in seeking after their spiritual good. There was no man like-minded to Paul, except *Timotheus* alone: for he is excepted, as appears from ver. 22. *Dock. 1.* It contribureth much for the good successe of a Minister's pains among a People, that he be looked upon by them, as one who will thirst after their good, more than any thing else: so Paul being to send *Timothie*, representeth him as such; *he naturally careth for your estate.* 2. That a Minister may be fitted to do good among a People, he would place before himself the patern of the Apostles; and so far as in him lyeth, set himself to imitate them in that care, diligence and affection, which they had towards the Church of Christ: for, herein is *Timothie* commended, *I have no man like-minded.* 3. Then doth a Minister imitate the Apostles in watching over their flock; when, first, the state of souls is the object of his care, *he careth for your state:* Secondly, when their care is more than ordinary, and in a sort anxious and solicitous: even a care, which in other things would be finfull; the Greek word signifieth such a care. And thirdly, when it is such, as is naturall and kindly, arising, not from constraint, *1 Pet. 5. 2.* but from love to the party cared for, being such, as is the care of a parent toward his child: *who will naturally care,* saith he.

Verf. 21. *For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christs.*

He further commendeth the care, which *Timotheus* had of them: It was such, that he postponed his own particular affairs, to the work of Christ among them, wherein he was singular; almost all others, who were with Paul, refusing (as would appear) to undertake so long a journey, from the too great respect they had to their own ease and profit. *Dock. 1.* So near is the relation betwixt Christ and the Church (such as is of the husband

to the wife, *Rev.* 21. 9. of the Head to the Members, *Eph.* 1. 22. of the King to his Subjects, *Matth.* 21. 5.) that both their concernments are one; what concerneth them, concerneth him: so, the under-taking of so long a journey, for the advantage of the Church at Philippi, which all declined, except *Timothens* onely, is here called, a *seeking the things of Jesus Christ*. 2. This commendeth a man's zeal for Christ much, when the luke warmnesse of others doth not blunt his edge; but, though all should be for their own things, yet, he alone will be for the things of Jesus Christ: for, herein is *Timothens* commended. 3. Our own things, that is, worldly ease, profit, credit, pleasure; and the things of Christ, wherein his honour, and the publick good of his people is much concerned, are often in two contrary ballances; respect to the former, making us frequently to neglect the latter: for, so are they here opposed: *their own things, not the things of Christ*. 4. Though Christians may, and justly ought, to seek their own things, with subordination to the things of Christ. *I Tim.* 5. 8. Yet, they may not seek their own things, in opposition to the things of Christ; that is, so, as for respect to the former, to neglect the latter: for, *Paul* condemnes not the seeking of their own things simply; but, that through seeking of them, they did not *seek the things of Christ*. 5. A Christian, and especially a Minister, ought to be so disposed, that no private interest, or concernment of his own, should so far weigh with him, as to make him, for respect unto it, shift, or refuse any thing, which Christ doth call him unto, for furtherance of his Work: for, herein is *Timothie* commended; and, for want of this disposition, the rest are blamed: *all seek their own things*. 6. The Lord, by putting Professours upon hazardous, troublesome, and expensive employments for Christ, discovereth often in many, too much love to self, and little love to Christ, which otherways would have lyen undiscovered: so, the motion of this long journey to Philippi, did discover in the most part of *Paul's* companions, that they did *seek their own things, and not the things of Christ*. Vers.

Verf. 22. But ye know the proof of him, that as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the Gospel.

For proof of all, he appealeth to their own experience, concerning *Timotheus*, while he preached the Gospel with *Paul* at *Philippi*, as a son with the father; which speaketh both his modestie, as also, that he was like-minded with *Paul*, in all things following his example. *Doff. 1.* A Minister's own carriage, if it be modest, Christian and ministerial, will speak more to his commendation among judicious Christians, than all the commendations which he can have from others, although these be in their own place usefull and lawfull: *but ye know the proof of him*, saith he, I need not speak much for him. 2. The calling of the Ministerie, is a service; and Ministers are servants to Christ, for the Church, and not lords over their faith, *1. Pet. 5. 3.* so *Paul* and *Timothie* did serve in the Gospel. 3. Those who are of older standing in the Ministerie, and thereby have attained a good measure of respect, parts, experience and prudence, should not despise these of later standing, but acknowledge them as fellow-servants: so *Paul*, though a great Apostle, and the elder Minister, yet acknowledgeth *Timothie* as his fellow-servant: *he hath served with me in the Gospel*, saith he. 4. These who are of late standing in the Ministry, ought to honour the aged, as the son doth the parent; obeying their counsels, and following their example in those things which tend to the edification of the Church: so did *Timothie* honour *Paul*: *as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the Gospel.*

Verf. 23 Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.

24. But I trust in the Lord, that I also my self shall come shortly.

He concludeth from what is said, his purpose to send *Timothee*, having once seen how himself should be disposed of, in relation to his present imprisonment and bonds, ver. 23. and withall, giveth them hopes, that he himself being set at liberty, should give them a visit shortly, ver. 24. *Dott. 1.* Those who have power of sending forth Ministers to Flocks, should send such as (other things being equall) are most willing to spend and be spent for the Peoples good, and are best known unto, and approved of by the Flock, for their modesty, diligence, zeal to the gaining of souls, and for their other parts: for, *Paul* having shewen *Timothee* to be such, concludeth, *him therefore will I send.* 2. A Minister may then postpone the publick good and comfort of the Church to his own particular, when his particular comfort may carry alongs with it a sufficient future recompence of larger comfort to the Church, for her present losse and delay: so *Paul* keepeth back *Timothee* for a time to attend himself, expecting that probably he should be liberate himself shortly, that by the certain knowledge of his being set at liberty, they might be the more comforted: *so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.* 3. The running upon hazard, and drawing on of a crosse by our former zeal for Christ, and diligence in his work, should not make us repent of what we have done; nor yet draw back from doing the like, when ever any new opportunity is offered: so *Paul* resolveth to go from the prison, to his work again: *I my self shall come shortly.* 4. Whatever may be said from Chap. i. v. 25. concerning *Pauls* perswasion, grounded upon speciall revelation of his delivery from prison, yet it appeareth, nothing was revealed to him of the time, when his delivery should be: and therefore in this place, when he would limit it to a short time, he speaketh not with so full perswasion: *I trust in the Lord to see you shortly,* saith he.

Verf. 25: Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in labour, and fellow-souldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

The Apostle in the mean time sendeth back their own Pastour Epaphroditus, who had been sent to Paul with some supply, and to minister unto him in the prison: And lest the Philippians should have thought, that either he had deserted Paul, or, that Paul had not thought him worth the keeping, he sheweth, that he had expressly sent him back, and commendeth him as a worthy man, from five honourable epithets. *Dist. 1.* There is a relation of fraternitie among Christians, as all being born over again through the vertue of the same spirit, *Eph. 4. 4.* within the bosom of one common mother the Church, *Gal. 4. 26.* having all interest in God, as their Father, *Rom. 8. 15.* and in Jesus Christ, who is the first-born among many brethren, *Rom. 8. 29.* for, Paul calleth Epaphroditus, a brother, as he was a Christian. *2.* As the Ministeriall employment is a painfull laborious work; to these who are employed in it, should be fellow-labourers, working to the hands each of other: for, in respect of the Ministeriall calling, common to both, he calleth him his companion in labour, or, co-worker. *3.* Though every Christian will have a battell, *Eph. 6. 12.* yet faithful Ministers, who are as Standard-bearers, or, Centinels, *Ezek. 3. 17.* and march in the front before the Lord's People, *1 Tim. 4. 12.* have a peculiar battell of their own for truth and pietie, against profanitie and errour: with respect to which battell, he calleth him fellow-souldier. *4.* To be employed by the Church, and sent upon her affairs, if it were but for conveying of their charity unto those for whom it is appointed, is an honourable employment, even to an Apostles companion: for, Paul commendeth him from this, that he was the Churches messenger, to wit, for carrying of their charity to Paul, Chap. 4. 18.

5. To be in any measure useful for, and serviceable unto an honest sufferer for Christ, is matter of no small commendation: for, *Epaphroditus* is commended from this, that he ministered unto Paul in his wants.

Verf. 26. *For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.*

The reasons, why Paul thought it necessary to send *Epaphroditus* unto them, are subjoyned in this and the two following verses; whereof the first is taken from *Epaphroditus* his great desire to be at his Charge, together with his great grief and heaviness for them, as knowing they would be exceedingly weightied for him, having heard that he was sick. *Doff. 1.* A faithful Minister's affection unto, and longing after his absent Flock, will go beyond his desire after family, friends, and other relations: for, his longing after them *all*, his whole Flock; and not his natural friends only, was that which necessitated Paul to send him home: *he longed after you all.* 2. The affection of a Minister unto his Flock, and to their advancing in the way of grace, ought to be such, that even when through necessity of sickness, or of other lawful employments, he is withdrawn from them, he may yet still long to be among them: so *Epaphroditus*, though detained by sickness, and his necessary attendance upon Paul, yet longed after them all. 3. There ought to be that love and sympathy betwixt Minister and People, as to make each of them grieve for the affliction and grief of another: so the Philippians hearing their Minister was sick, are weightied with it, and he knowing they would be grieved for him, becometh full of heaviness for them: *he was full of heaviness, because ye had heard he was sick.* 4. Grief or heaviness of mind, because of the hand of God upon our selves, or others, is not inconsistent with christian patience and submission to providence: Patience moderateth those passions, but doth not destroy them: so *Epaphroditus* is commended from this, that he was full of heaviness, because of their grief.

Verf.

Verf. 27. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death, but God had mercy on him : and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

He sheweth the report of *Epaphroditus* his deadly disease was true, and commendeth the especial mercy of God, both to *Epaphroditus* and himself; whereby the one was restored to health, and the other thereby delivered from further occasion of great grief. *Dott. 1.* The Lord doth sometimes suffer his precious servants to fall in dangerous diseases, not exempting his most faithful Ministers, who, by reason of their labours in the work of the Lord, and the many discouragements whereby their spirits are assaulted in it, (*Isa. 49. 4.*) are as much liable to diseases and infirmities of body as any other: *for indeed he was sick.* 2. The Lord doth sometimes suffer his servants to fall into desperate dangers, for which there is no humane remedy, that his mercy may be the more seen in their delivery: *so he was sick near unto death;* his disease was deadly and incurable by humane art: hence his restoration to health is looked on as an act of Gods mercy; *but God had mercy on him.* 3. That God preserveth the life of faithful Pastors, is an act of no small mercy, especially unto those who enjoy the benefit of their labours: and the removal of such by death, should be looked upon as no small stroke: *but God had mercie;* and his removal by death would have been *sorrow upon sorrow,* even to *Paul.* 4. Seeing death, considered in it self, is terrible, *Psal. 55. 4.* the reward of sin, *Rom. 6. 23.* and a privation of present life, *Jam. 2. 26.* Deliverie from it, though but for a time, is a mercy even to believers, who by death lose nothing, but gain much, *Chap. 1. v. 23.* especially if their delivery from death be a mercy unto others: hence it is that *Epaphroditus* his delivery from death was a mercy even unto himself, *but God had mercy on him.* 5. A work of mercy ordinarily goeth not alone, but carryeth many mercies along with it; some to the person him-

himself upon whom the work is wrought; and some to others who are concerned in him: Thus the mercy that was manifested to *Epaphroditus* in his recovery, was a mercy also to *Paul*; and not on him only, but on me also. 6. Then do mercies weigh with us as they ought, when we look upon the sad effects which would have followed upon the not bestowing of such a mercy: Thus *Paul* taketh a view of the extremity of sorrow which the death of *Epaphroditus* would have caused unto him, which maketh him look upon his recovery as a mercy; but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. 7. So merciful is God, that though sometimes he causeth grief unto his dearest servants, yet he considereth their weakness, and doth not overcharge them with sorrow: so he spared the life of *Epaphroditus*, lest *Paul* should have had sorrow upon sorrow. 8. Courage under sufferings for Christ, and rejoycing in God may well consist with moderate sorrow and heaviness, because of crosse dispensations: for, though *Paul* hath professed often his great joy under his bonds (as chap. 1. v. 4. 18.) yet he was not free of sorrow; lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow, which supposeth he had some sorrow already.

Verf. 28. I sent him therefore the more carefully, that when ye see him again, ye may rejoyce, and that I may be the lesse sorrowful.

Having given and enlarged one reason for his sending *Epaphroditus*, he addeth other two. First, That the *Philippians*, having seen their faithful Minister, whom they once took for dead, might rejoyce. Secondly, That *Paul's* own grief might be somewhat eased, their Minister being once restored to them, of whom they were deprived for his cause. *Doct. 1.* True love and christian friendship protracteth not favours, but doth timeously what should and may be done for those unto whom it pretendeth: so *Paul* sendeth him timeously and carefully, that is, presently after his recovery; I sent him therefore the more carefully.

carefully. 2. The weight and grief of the godly do prove an occasion of rejoycing afterwards; their evening of sorrow, endeth in a morning of joy: So, the grief which these Philippians had, because of their Pastours sicknesse and apprehended death, endeth in joy, when they see him in health again: *that when ye see him again, ye may rejoyce.* 3. It will be somewhat burdensome to an ingenuous spirit, whatever otherwayes be his straits, that others should suffer prejudice, and be at any losse by reason of their kindnesse unto him: So it was matter of sorrow unto Paul, that those Philippians, because of their respect unto him, were so long deprived of their own Minister: this was the sorrow which he was to be eased of by his return: *that I may be the lesse sorrowfull.* 4. It is sufficient for modest, submissive, and exercised Christians, to meet with some mitigation of their sorrow, though it be not removed from them wholly: So Paul looks on this as satisfactory to him, that of the great weight of sorrow and affliction, wherewith he was pressed, a part was to be removed: *that I might be the lesse sorrowfull,* saith he.

Verf. 19. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such in reputation:

From what he hath said of Epaphroditus, he exhorteth them to receive him with all joy, and to give all due honour and respect unto him, and to such Ministers as he was, *Dof. 1.* The carriage or deportment of people towards faithful Ministers, should not be as unto private friends; but as to publick persons representing Christ, as sent from Christ, and as Ambassadors in Christ's stead: for this is to receive them in the Lord, which Paul here commandeth. 2. There cannot a richer blessing be bestowed upon a People, than that of a faithfull, painfull, and loving Minister; therefore Paul bids them receive him with all gladnesse, as if he had been all the friends they had in the world restored unto them from death to life.

3. When the Lord doth blesse a People with such a Minister, they ought to esteeme highly of him, as of a precious Jewell, and pearl of price; as they would not by their ingratitude and loathing contempt, provoke the Lord to plague them with his removall, *Matth. 10. 23. hold such in reputation*, or, esteeme of such as precious. 4. As it is Satans great design, to bring a faithfull, painfull Minister to disgrace and contempt, *Zech. 3. 1.* So it is the duty of all, who with the thriving of piety, and the Church to be secured from profanity and error, by all means to uphold the credite of that calling, together with the lawfull authority and due respect of these who carry themselves faithfullly in it: so *Paul* commandeth, *that such be held in reputation.*

Verſe 30. Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

He giveth a reason why they ought to receive him gladly, because he had in a sort mis-regarded his life, and brought himself to the door of death, for the work of Christ, that is, by his watching, travell and pains taking, to minister unto *Paul* in his necessities, doing his utmost, that *Paul* should want no necessary duty, no more than if all the *Philippians* had been present attending him; at whose direction he did what he did, and which they would have done themselves, if they had been present.

Dott. 1. Not only the preaching of the Word, but also the performance of the duties of humanity, civility, and charity unto those who suffer for truth, is the work of Christ, and that, not only because such works are particularly enjoined by Christ, *Heb. 13. 3.* but what is done unto any such, is accompted done to him: See *Matth. 25. 36. 40.* So *Epaphroditus* his attending upon *Paul* in prison, is called, *the work of Christ.* 2. Then may a man have a good conscience under his sicknesse and bodily infirmities, yea, and death it self, when his well-ordered

zeal

zeal for Christ, hath brought them on : for, *Epaphroditus* is here commended, that *for the work of Christ he was near unto death* ; he had no evill conscience therefore in bringing sicknesse upon himself. 3. However God loveth mercy better than sacrifice, and willeth no man foolishly and rashly to be prodigall of his own life and health; no not under pretence of doing service unto him, *1 Tim. 5. 23.* Yet there are some cases, wherein he calleth men to the performance of some duties, and which they should be willing to go about, although they should evidently perceive most certain hazard of life and health to ensue thereby : such are the duties of owning those who suffer for Christ, contributing to the supply of their outward necessities, when they cannot be supplied other-ways, the faithfull discharging of any publick employment, wherein we are intrusted : those were the duties, for performance whereof, *Epaphroditus* regarded not his life, wherein he is here commended, *for the work of Christ he regarded not his life to supply your lack of service.* 4. As it sometimes falleth out, that through distance of place, or other insuperable difficulties, the children of God cannot manifest that cordiall affection by their own presence and personall attendance, which they carry unto those who suffer for truth : so they ought to supply that in-lack, so far as is possible by others, who, representing them, may go about these duties of humanity and charity, in their name : Thus there was no want of affection in these Philippians toward *Paul*, onely there was a *lack of service*, they not being able, though otherwayes willing to attend him because of distance of place, and they direct their Pastour to supply this *lack of their service towards him.*

CHAP. III.

IN the first part of this Chapter, having pre-
mitted an exhortation to rejoyce in the
Lord Christ, v. 1. he exhorteth them to be-
ware of false teachers, who gloried in cir-
cumcision, v. 2. shewing, that not they, but
he, and other true believers had right to that title, v. 3.

In the second part, being to oppose his own practice,
to their dangerous opinions in the matter of Justifica-
tion, he sheweth, he had as much to boast of, as they,
v. 4. which he instanceth in eight privileges, v. 5, 6. In
none whereof he did now place any confidence, v. 7. nor
yet upon any thing imaginary, without Christ; confirm-
ing this his resolution & practice, by shewing the advan-
tages to be hereby gained, namely, 1. access to Christ, v. 8.
Secondly, his being judged, not according to his own
righteousnesse, but Christ's, v. 9. Thirdly, experimentall
knowledge of the worth and power which is in Christ,
v. 10. And fourthly, his attaining to the glorious resur-
rection of the just, v. 11. And obviateth a mistake, shew-
ing he had not yet attained unto perfection in the know-
ledge of, and conformity with Christ; but that it was his
aim, v. 12. which he insargeth and cleareth by a simili-
tude taken from runners, v. 13, and 14.

In the third part, he exhorteth them to follow his ex-
ample, leaving place for God to give a more full mani-
festation of any thing which was doubtfull, v. 15. pro-
viding they did walk peaceably and tenderly, v. 16. and
so having repeated the exhortation, v. 17. he inforceth it,
because 1. there were many, whose example was not to
be followed, to wit, the false Apostles, whom he setteth
forth in their blackest colours, v. 18, 19. Secondly, his
own example was worth the following, v. 20. and he,
with such as he was, to be rewarded gloriously, v. 21.

Verf. 1: Finally, my Brethren, rejoyce in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.

THAT he may guard those Philippians against the Errors of the false Teachers in the doctrine of justification, he premitts an exhortation to rejoyce in the Lord Christ, as the author, purchaser, and worker out of their salvation, and all their other happinesse; excusing himself for his often inculcating of the following admonition, because it was not wearisome unto him, nor yet unprofitable for them. *Doct.* 1. Unity in judgment and affection would be so pressed upon us by others, and endeavoured by our selves, as not to prejudge the purity of doctrine: for, having pressed unity, chap. 2. he presseth purity of doctrine as much in this. 2. According as people are tainted with, or tempted unto Error, so should Ministers be more or lesse in the publick refutation of it: Thus the Apostle, writing to the Galatians, entereth a just dispute with the false Apostles, urging reasons, and answering objections, because many in that Church were already seduced by them, *Gal.* 3. 1. But here, because the Philippians were only tempted unto, and not much overtaken with Error, he doth not so much dispute, as admonish and exhort. 3. To rejoyce in Christ, that is, to keep our hearts affected towards him, and the doctrine which speaketh of him, to be constantly and with delight making our recourse unto him, and imploying him as the author, procurer, and worker out of all our happinesse here and hereafter, is a choice guard against any Error, which is contrary unto those Truths relating to him: for, the Apostle being to guard against Errors in the doctrine of justification, premiteth this as a foundation to the whole work, *rejoyce in the Lord.* 4. It is not sufficient to know what Jesus Christ is, what he hath done for us, or what use may, and should be made of him; except that the knowledge which we have of him do produce suitable affections in

the heart towards him : for, having made Christ known, chap. 2 v. 6, &c. he inferreth from thence with a *finally* that their hearts should *rejoyce in him*, the word saith as much as there remaining one thing yet necessary. 5. The often repeating and frequent inculcating of such points of Truth as are most for edification of the hearers, ought neither to be burdensome to a Minister, nor yet wearied of by the people : so, to inculcate often the following admonition was not *grievous unto Paul*, neither were they to weary of it, *because unto them it was safe*. 6. Temptations unto Error; for, the most part are covered over with such pious pretences, *Col. 2. 23.* and lovely baits, *Gal. 6. 12.* that there is need of many guards and frequent warnings to keep them off ; so the Apostle thinketh it necessary to reiterate again and again, both by preaching while he was present, and now by Letter while he is absent, this following exhortation, To beware of false Teachers : *But for you it is safe.*

Vers. 2. *Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.*

He exhorteth them particularly to beware of false-teachers, who did labour to conjoyn, in the matter of justification, the righteousness of works with that righteousness which is of Christ by faith ; whom he calleth, first, *Dogs*, because of their barking against the sincere Doctrine of the Gospel, and their railing against the orthodox Preachers thereof ; and this all, to get wherewith to satisfy their unsatiable greed. Secondly, *Evil workers* ; because under pretence of working well to establish Truth, and build up the Church, they did what in them lay to destroy them both, and were men of wicked lives, ver. 19. However they pretended much zeal for the Law of *Moses*, and good works. Thirdly, *Concision*, alluding to Circumcision, whereof they gave out themselves to be Patrons and defenders, and designed themselves by *R. Gal. 2. 12.* which name he taketh from them, as being

ing unworthy of it; and calleth them *concision*, as it were, the destroyers and renters of the Church. *Doff. 1.* There ought to be a spirit of wise and godly zeal in faithfull Preachers, against the spreaders of Errors, how great soever their reputation be among the people: so Paul calleth them *Dogs, &c.* 2. That Ministers may guard the Lords People against seducers, they would labour to undeceive them, by taking off the vizard of piety, zeal, and other seeming vertues, under which the spreaders of Errors do usually lurk, that so they may be seen in their own colours; thus they pretended to puritie, to be patrons of good works, and upholders of Circumcision, one of Gods Ordinances; and the Apostle taking off the vizard, calleth them prophane *dogs, evil workers, and concision*, or, Church-renters, under pretence of pleading for a divine Ordinance. 3. It is the Duty of the Lords People to know and discern those who preach Truth, from those who preach Error, that they may cleave to the one and flee from the other: *beware of dogs*; the word signifieth see, and know them; and from knowledge, eschew them. 4. It is not unbecoming piety, to use merry words, witty and pleasant allusions; yea, and upon some occasions, piercing jests or taunts; providing alwaies there be no scurrility or basenesse, *Eph. 5. 4* for, as often elsewhere, *1 King. 18. 27.* So the Spirit of God here maketh use of such, while alluding to Circumcision, he calleth them *Concision*, giving them a name like in sound, but much different in the usual signification, and as much to their disadvantage.

Verf. 3. For we are the Circumcision. which worship God in the spirit, and rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

He giveth a reason why he did not daign them with the name of Circumcision; because not they, but he, and true Believers had right to that title, they only having the thing signified by circumcision, whereof he maketh

three parts: first, Worshipping God with the inward and spiritual affections of a renewed heart: Secondly, Confiding in Christ alone for salvation, as being the substance of all these shadows: Thirdly, A denying of confidence in any of these fleshly priviledges, or in any thing but Christ. *Dist. 1.* Though fair pretences to piety and purity of Worship be alwaies on the side of those who erre from Truth, *Matth. 7. 15.* yet the realiry of that piety unto which they pretend, is frequently to be found in those who oppose them most: so was it here, *We are the Circumcision*; that is, we have the realiry of that Ordinance; and they only a pretence unto, and shadow of it. 2. Circumcision, and the rest of those Levitical Ordinances may be said in some sense yet to continue, in so far as the thing signified by them doth remain: for, therefore *Paul* calleth true Believers the Circumcision, because they had the thing signified by it, *We are the Circumcision, who serve God in the spirit.* 3. Circumcision was instituted for this end, that by the outward cutting off the flesh the People of God might be carried on; first, To cut off the sinful fleshly affections of their heart, that so with renewed spirits they might serve God. And secondly, To lay hold on the blood of the promised Messias for pardon of sin, and salvation: for, *Paul* mentioneth those two as the thing signified by Circumcision, *We worship God in the spirit, and rejoyce in Jesus Christ.* 4. Though it was sufficient for *Paul* to oppose the inward Worship of the heart to the practice of Circumcision, once an Ordinance. but now abolished; yet it followeth not that outward Ordinances, while standing in force, may upon that accompt be wholly neglected, *Gen. 17. 14.* for if the outward rite of Circumcision had been yet in force, his pretending to the thing signified, would not have justified his omission of it. 5. External performance of commanded Worship, without inward exercise of the spirit in faith, love, hope, and mortification of fleshly lusts by the power of Gods Spirit, is scarce worthy of the name of Worship to God, neither will it be owned by him as such:

such: for, it is this exercise of the spirit unto which Paul giveth the name of true Worship; *We are the circumstances, which serve God in the spirit.* 6. We should so go about commanded Duties in spirit and truth, as not to rest upon, or glory in them, but in Christ alone and his righteousness, as the only meritorious cause of our salvation: So, though they worshipped God in the spirit; yet *we rejoyce in Christ Jesus*, saith he. 7. Confidence in Christ for salvation, and upon any other thing besides him; such as are outward priviledges, external performances, are so inconsistent with, and opposite to one another, that if the one be, the other cannot be: so Paul opposeth them here; *We rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*

Ver. 4. *Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he may trust in the flesh, I more.*

The Apostle in the second part of the chapter, being to demonstrate the vanity of relying upon any thing besides Christ in the point of justification, from his own practice, sheweth; 1. That he had as much to boast of, upon the accompt of outward priviledges, as any of his adversaries; yea, or any other whatsoever, if he had found it safe to venture his salvation on such a boxom; and this he declareth, first, in general in this verse. *Dott. 1.* The Lord in his deep wisdom raiseth up such, as are most fit to oppose seducers, who come not short of them in any thing whereof they glory most; that even wherein they glory they may be found but as others: see 2 Cor. II. 12. Thus, against those who boasted so much in their outward priviledges, as to oppose them unto Christ's righteousness in the matter of justification, he raiseth up Paul to batter down both their pride and error, who had as much matter of boasting that way as they, or any other: *Though I might have also confidence in the flesh.* 2. Then may a man commend himself by making notour what he

he hath of graces, parts, or priviledges, equally with, or above others, when his doing so tendeth to beat down the vain glory of those who boast more of what they are than is meet: for, Paul here declareth at length his outward priviledges, wherein he would yeeld to none: which he could not have done without ostentation, except it had been to shew the vanity and pride of his adversaries. 3. The glory and praise of safety from Gods wrath, which men do promise unto themselves from their parts or priviledges, as they are opposed unto Christ, is not so much in reality as in mens own conceipt and fancie; therefore, he saith not, If any other man *hath*, but, *if he think he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh.*

Verf. 5. Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews: as touching the Law, a Pharisee:

6. *Concerning zeal, persecuting the Church: touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blamelesse.*

What he spake in general of his ceding to none in those things, whereof his adversaries boasted most, he maketh now to appear by reckoning forth eight priviledges. As first, he *was circumcised*, and so a member of the Church, *Gen. 17. 11.* Secondly, *The eighth day*, to wit, after his birth, and so no Profelyte or Convert from among the Gentiles, *Exod. 12. 48.* Thirdly, *Of the stock of Israel*, and so not the son of a Profelyte, who used to be circumcised the eighth day, *Gen. 17. 12.* Fourthly, *Of the tribe of Benjamin*; whereby he sheweth the certainty of the former, by pointing at his particular tribe; as also the nobility of his race; the first King of Israel being of that tribe, *1 Sam. 10. 20, 21.* And that he came of that tribe, which with the tribe of Judah clave to the house of David, and the true Worship of God at Jerusalem, after the revolt of the ten Tribes. Fifthly, *An Hebrew of the Hebrews*, to shew his descent from Abraham, called the Hebrew, *Gen. 14. 13.* without any mixture of blood by

by marriage with foreign Nations, which might be exactly known by their publick Registers, wherein was marked the several descents of particular families, *Ezra. 2. 62.* Sixthly, *As touching the Law, a Pharisee*, and so for his profession most strict; the sect of the Pharisees pretending to more strictness than any other: see *Act. 26. 5.* Seventhly, For his zeal to the Law he was most fervent, and so, that without respect of persons *he persecuted the Christian Church*, who were looked upon as destroyers of the Law. And eighthly, *As to his personal obedience unto the Law, his conversation was blameless*; he could not be justly taxed by men, who see no further than the outside, *1 Sam. 16. 7. Doct. 1.* Those things which natural men, especially the finer sort of hypocrites, rely upon, before they come to Christ, are such, as are here reckoned forth, and may be reduced unto three heads; first, Church priviledges; such were the first five. Secondly, Strictness and zeal in profession; such were the sixth and seventh. Thirdly, A life free from scandal, and as to men, blameless; such was the eighth: for *Paul* mentioneth all those, as props whereupon men who are destitute of Christ do rely; yea, and himself did once place his confidence in them, as appears from v. 7. *Those things were gain unto me. Doct. 2.* A profession of more than ordinary strictness in religious observances, is no infallible mark of grace: for, natural men without Christ, yea Church-renters and dividing Sects, such as were the Pharisees, may pretend to it: So *Paul* once, to wit, when he was out of Christ, and a renter and persecuter of the Church, boasted in this, That he was a Pharisee, that is, one of that Sect, which pretended to more nor ordinary strictness. 3. Where men do once engage themselves in Sects and Schisms, their furious zeal will drive them on to prosecute their neatest relations, and those who have nearest interest in Christ, if they oppose themselves to their damnable Errors; and to place the very substance of Religion, and of doing service unto God, in their persecuting of them: So *Paul* being a Schismatick Pharisee, did

did persecute all who were of the Church without distinction; and mentioneth his so doing, as one prop of his confidence and boasting, before he came to Christ; *concerning zeal, persecuting the Church.* 4. Natural men, yea bloody persecutors may attain to freedom from any outward vice, and to such a conversation as will be in the sight of men altogether blamelesse: So Paul, even when persecuting the Church he was, as *touching the righteousness which is of the Law, blamelesse.*

Verf. 7. But what things were gain to me, those I counted losse for Christ.

Having shown what he had to boast of, he declareth his esteem of all those things, to wit, That however when he was in an unconverted state he relied upon them for salvation as much as any other; yet now, having seen nothing would redound unto him thereby, but a real hurt & damage, he had taken his confidence from off them, and wholly placed it on Christ. *Decl. 1.* It is a matter of great difficulty for any man, especially in an unconverted estate, to excell in parts, priviledges, or in a blamelesse life beyond others; and not rely on them, as that which will bring them to Heaven; and so in effect put them in Christ's place; for, *those things were gain to Paul*; he thought to merit Heaven by them. 2. Whatever a man doth rely upon without, or besides Christ for righteousness and salvation, he will, when rightly enlightened, see a reall losse and hurt to be in it: So, *those things were counted losse by Paul*; because not only they could not effectuate that for which he did rely upon them; but also his confidence in them, and the esteem which he had of them, impeded him much from coming to Christ. *those I counted losse.* 3. There is that in Christ, and only in him, wherein a soul thoroughly touched with the sight of sin and deserved wrath, will find full and solid satisfaction in order to righteousness and salvation: So Paul, being thus touched, *Act. 9. 6.* taketh his confidence from off all those things, placing it only on Christ; *he counted them*

them losse for Christ; that is, that he might know him, gain him, and be found in him, being cloathed with his righteousness, as he explaineth afterwards.

Verf. 8. *Yea doubtlesse, and I count all things but losse, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the losse of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ.*

What he hath presently spoken of, taking his confidence from any thing in himself, and placing it wholly upon Christ, he repeateth again and again, and extendeth it also to all things imaginable without Christ: which things however in themselves excellent, yet being compared with excellent Christ (and as to the point of placing confidence upon them) were but losse and damage unto him: and however the taking of his confidence from off them, was difficult for him, and a very suffering upon his part, yet he had done it, and in the mean time did not repent himself of it, counting them as very dung in the fore-mentioned respects; and this all, that he might gain Christ. *Doct. 1.* In the matter of our justification before God, we are not only not to rely upon our Church-privileges, or our works seemingly good before conversion; but also are not to place our confidence even in these works which are really good, as being wrought in us by the Spirit of God after our conversion: for Paul maketh his speech to rise from those things which he had, being yet in nature to all things, even not excepting those which he had, being now converted, although before that time he had done many things, which were really good, *Yea doubtlesse, I count (in the present time) all things losse.* 2. Before a man do quite his own righteousness, and all his other props of vain confidence, to rely wholly upon Christ, he must first know somewhat of Christ's worth and sufficiencie to do his turn; so Paul hath some knowledge of a matchlesse excellencie in Christ, which serveth as a motive to make him undervalue all other things, to be at him: *for the excellencie of the*

the knowledge, &c. 3. The bare knowledge of Christ's excellencie and worth, is not sufficient for righteousness and salvation, except the heart by faith fasten upon, and adhere to him, being so known: for, the word *knowledge*; according to the custome of the Hebrew language includeth the acts of the will, and affections following upon it, *Psal. 1. 6.* and so it is afterward expounded in these words, *that I may gain him, be found in him, having his righteousness.* 4. He that hath taken his confidence from off his own righteousness, and placed it wholly upon Christ, may and should plead interest in Christ, and boast of him as his: so doth Paul; *the knowledge of Christ my Lord.* 5. A man will not attain to quit his own righteousness, and his other props of vain confidence, to be take himself wholly unto Christ, untill he be made to do it: the Law and a wakened conscience must drive him out of those lurking holes, before he quit them. *Rom. 7. 9.* hence, he saith, *for whom I have suffered the losse of all things,* that is, as the merchant suffereth the losse of his goods, by casting them away in the time of a storm, which is sore against his heart if he could do otherwayes and were not through fear of the losse of his life driven unto it: the originall word signifieth such a suffering of losse as this. 6. So excellent is Christ, that all things compared with him, and set in opposition to him, have that much of baseness in them, that hardly a word base enough can be found to expresse them: so, he counteth, *even all things*, compared with, and opposed to him, *not only losse, but dung.* 7. So compleat is that satisfaction which is to be found in Christ, when he is thoroughly ventured upon for righteousness and salvation, that the man which hath so done, needs not, yea, will not repent himself of so doing: or, for undervaluing, quiring, and trampling upon every thing which impeded him from closing with him: for, Paul, who had suffered the losse of all things for him, taking a review of what he had done, seeth no reason to recede from it: and therefore in the mean time saith, *I do count them but dung.* 8. Our

8. Our closing with Christ by faith for righteousness and salvation, having denied confidence unto any other thing besides him, is a grace: the acts whereof would be often repeated; avowed and stood to; because it groweth and riseth higher the more it is exercised: So Paul in these two Verses, repeatech it thrice, and his speech doth still rise by degrees; *those I counted losse, yea, I count all things but losse, and do count them but nothing*, saith he. 9. There is no gaining of Christ and his righteousness, except we renounce our own first: and the more of losse and damage we see in our own works, parts and privileges, the more fully and freely the heart be taken off from relying on those, there is the more ready access to close with Christ; and thereby, to get all that is in him made our own: for Paul, by counting all those losse, and not otherwayes, gaineth Christ: *that I may gain Christ*.

Ver. 9. *And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith*: *that I may be found in Christ*.

He hath shewen one advantage by renouncing confidence in himself, to wit, his gaining Christ: here is a second, that hereby in the day, when God shall search sinners, chiefly in the day of generall judgement, he should be found by God, incorporated in Christ; and sentence should passe upon him, not according to his own inherent righteousness, which consisteth in personall obedience unto the law, but according to that imputed righteousness of Christ's, freely gifted by God; and received by faith. *Doct. 1.* It shall go well with those, and those only, in the day of exact search and tryall, especially in the day of generall judgement, who shall be found in Christ: for this is the great advantage of his counting all things losse, *that I may be found in Christ*. 2. Whoever hath once sincerely closed with Christ by faith, shall constantly remain united to, and ingrafted in him: for,

far, the Apostle supponeth, that once having gained Christ, he shall be found in him at the last day: *and he found in him.* 3. As there is no comparing before God in the great day to a man's own safety and comfort, without some righteousness of one sort or other; so there is no inherent righteousness consisting in a man's own personal obedience unto the Law, which can secure him from the dint of God's anger and justice: therefore, saith he, *not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law,* that is, not relying on it, as that which would commend him to God; and all righteousness inherent, even that which is wrought in us by the Spirit of God, is called *our own*, because it is really in us, *1 Pet. 1. 8.* and we our selves, being wrought upon by God, do really concur for the working of it, *v. 12.* 4. Not only works done in obedience to the Ceremoniall Law, or by men in their unrenewed state, are uselesse, as to the justification of a sinner; but even those also, which are performed by the truly godly and regenerate, in obedience to the Morall Law: for, *Paul* quith all that righteousness, which could be called *his* in the mean time, when he had been now of a long time renewed: *not having mine own righteousness.* 5. That righteousness which can sufficiently secure a man in the great day, from the dint of God's wrath and justice, is onely Christ's, so wit, that righteousness which was inherent onely in him, and but imputed unto us, *Rom. 5. 19.* *That which is through the faith of Christ*, saith he; that is, faith laying hold on Christ. 6. This righteousness which can secure a lost sinner from the stroke of justice, hath relation unto God in a particular manner, as being the righteousness of that Person, who is God, *1 Pet. 2. 24.* that onely righteousness which is accepted of God, *Matth. 3. 17.* and the imputation whereof to unrighteous sinners, being found out by the onely wise God, *Matth. 11. 25.* *The righteousness which is of God.* 7. There is no gain to be had from this righteousness, by a lost sinner, except he lay hold on it by faith: therefore it's called *the righteousness which is of God by faith,*

faith. 8. The grace of faith, doth justify, and make a sinner righteous, not as it is our work : for, so it is a part of our righteousness which is by the Law ; seeing the Law commandeth faith. 1. *Job. 3. 23.* but as it apprehendeth Jesus Christ and his righteousness : not having mine own righteousness by the Law, but that which is of God by faith, faith he.

Verf. 10. *That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.*

A third advantage to be reaped by renouncing confidence in all things without Christ, is, That hereby he should, and in part did experimentally know the worth that is in Christ, and find the power of his resurrection, raising him from the death of sin to the life of grace, as also somewhat of that comfort and joy which is in suffering for him, and with him in his mystical body ; and so should be made conform to Christs death, as holding forth a resemblance of it. *Doct. 1.* Besides that knowledge of faith which Believers have of Christ, whereby credit is given to the Word, because of the authority of him whose Word it is, *Job. 20. 29.* there is an experimental knowledge, whereby Believers, from his effectual working in them, do find and cast him to be that which the Word affirmeth of him, *Psal. 34. 8.* It is the knowledge the Apostle here aspieth unto, *that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection.* 2. The more a man attaineth to see the losse and vanity of all things without, and in comparison with Christ, and to rely wholly upon Christ, He will attain to the more experimental knowledge and lively sense of the worth and power which is in Christ ; for this is one advantage which he reapeth by counting all things losse for Christ : *that I may know him*, to wit, experimentally. 3. To rely wholly upon the righteousness of Christ for justification, and nothing at all upon our own, conduceth much to the increase of holiness,

and in no wayes doth prejudice it, *Rom. 3. 21.* for, the fruit of not having his own righteousnesse, but Christs, is his knowing by experience the vertue of Christs resurrection, in raising him from the death of sin to the life of grace: *and the power of his resurrection.* 4. The sufferings which Believers do undergo for Christ, and for his Church, are a partaking with Christ in those his sufferings which he still endureth in his mystical body, the Church: for, so much is taught by those words, *the fellowship of his sufferings*, to wit, which he endureth in his mystical body, the Church; see *Col. 1. 24.* 5. As justified persons are not exempted from sad sufferings, such as others of Christs mystical body, the Church, are exercised with; so they enjoy a desirable sweetnesse in them when they meet with them: *Paul* expected this, else he would not have desired to know the fellowship of his sufferings. 6. The experience and tast of this desirable sweetnesse, is only felt by him, who by denying his own righteousnesse, and laying hold upon the imputed righteousnesse of Christ, hath made his peace with God: for, the fruit of *Pauls* counting all things losse to gain Christ, is his knowing by experience that sweetnesse which is in the communion of his sufferings. 7. An holy man patiently undergoing a crosse for Christ, is an evident resemblance of Christs death, who notwithstanding that he was forely assualted by men, *Luk. 4. 29.* and Devils, *Matth. 4. 3.* Yet remained holy, harmlesse, undefiled, and separate from sinners, *Isa. 53. 9.* preferring his Fathers glory, and good of Believers, to his own ease and immunity from sufferings, *Matth. 26. 39.* So *Paul*, by partaking of his sufferings, should be made conform to his death. 8. This may make the most bitter crosse lovely, and, in a sort, desirable unto an unholy man, that hereby he is made the more like unto his Lord and Master: for, this maketh *Paul* aim at the fellowship of his sufferings, even that thereby he was to be made conformable unto his death.

Verf. 11: *If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.*

Here is a fourth advantage to be reaped by renouncing confidence in all things but Christ, to wit, hereby, and by exercising himself in holiness, and patient suffering for Christ (whereof ver. 10.) he should, though with much difficulty, attain unto the glorious resurrection of the Just, and have his portion in it: for, he meaneth here the resurrection proper to Believers only, as 1 Thess. 4. 14; &c. Doct. 1. The gain of closing with Christ and his righteousness, reacheth further than to any thing within time; it accompanieth a man in death, preserveth his dust in the grave until the last day; at the which time it shall raise him up, and make him partaker of the glorious resurrection of the Just: for, Paul propoundeth all this unto himself, as the fruit of his closing with Christ, while he saith, *I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead.* 2. However our closing with Christs righteousness by faith giveth a right to, and an interest in that blessed resurrection, and all the glory which is then to be imparted unto Believers, Job. 3. 36. Yet there is a way of holiness, and patient enduring of the crosse, by which Believers must walk unto it: for, he propoundeth the knowledge of Christs resurrection, and fellowship of his sufferings, ver. 10. as the way leading to it: *If by any means, &c.* 3. As there is no small difficulty for any of the lost sons of Adam, to attain unto this blessed resurrection; so where the reality of it is believed, difficulties will but kindle desire, and quicken our diligence to be at it: for, the Apostle, *If by any means*, importeth not his doubt of the thing, or of his partaking of it; only hereby he would set out the great difficulty of attaining unto it, together with his ardent desire, and unwearied diligence to be at it: *If by any means*, saith he.

Verf. 12. Not as though I had already attained; either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

Having shown the advantage flowing from closing with Christ, he holdeth forth more of his own practice, and thereby sheweth the duty of a man already ingrafted in Christ, which is, from the sense of his own shortcoming in the knowledge of Christ, his imperfection in grace, and conformity with Christ to endeavour constant progresse, and to aim at no lesse than perfection in all those; that being the scope which the Believer is called to aim at, when he is first laid hold upon by Christ in his effectual calling. Now the Apostle propoundeth this his practice to obviate a mistake which might arise from his former speech, as if he had been perfectly instructed in the knowledge of Christ, and fully conform unto him already, and so needed not to busie himself about Christ further, but might aspire after an higher perfection by conformity with the Ceremonial Law, as the false Apostles did, *Doct. 1.* So ingenious is Error and apt to lay hold upon any thing which may make for its own defence, that it will take advantage to shelter it self by that which is spoken in direct refutation of it: for, as is said, *Paul* seeth a necessity to guard what he hath presently spoken against the urgers of Circumcision, lest thereby they should have fastened upon him that which would have made for their advantage, *Not as if I had already attained*, saith he. 2. They who have made greatest progresse in the knowledge of Christ, and in conformity with him, are far short of what they should be: so was *Paul*, *Not as though I had already attained*. 3. Believers ought to be sensible of this their imperfection, and sometimes also acknowledge it: that hereby they may be kept humble, made to aspire unto further growth; and others may be preserved from dangerous mistakes of them,

themselves of the high esteem which other wayes they may seem to have of themselves: As both Paul, *not that I have directly attained.*

4. Then are we tightly sensible of our falling short of what we should be, when we are not thereby discouraged, but rather incited to make swifter progresse toward the mark; *but I follow after,* saith he.

5. Though perfection in holinesse be not attainable in this life, yet we are to aim at no lesse: Paul followed after, *that he might apprehend,* to wit, that perfection which was yet wanting.

6. That there is any motion towards that which is spiritually good, proceedeth wholly from Jesus Christ, whose grace doth first lay hold upon us in our effectuall calling; when we were dead in sins and trespasses, *Ephes. 2. 1.* and having infused principles of a new life in us, we are made to bestir our selves in the way of holinesse: Paul is first apprehended of Christ, and then he followeth after to apprehend.

Verf. 13. Brethren, I count not my self to have apprehended; *but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,*

14. I presse toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

He doth again acknowledge his own short-coming,

and sheweth also his constant endeavour after perfection,

which he enlargeth and cleareth by a similitude taken

from runners in a race, who, without looking behinde,

so count how much of the way is already past, as carryed

on with such a vehement desire to promote in the way,

that they bend their bodies forward, having their heart,

eyes and whole course, streight toward the end of the

race, untill they attain unto it: Thus was Paul carryed on

in his christian course, being encouraged by the hopes

of the rich reward unto which he was called, and which

was purchased for him by Jesus Christ. *Doff. 1.* There

is much divine wisdom and prudence required in Mi-

nisters,

nisters, as in all the duties of their calling, so especially, while they are about to fasten conviction of guiltinesse upon any; lest they do irritate their corruptions in stead of curing them. Thus the Apostle wisely points out the vanity of their conceit, who looked upon themselves as having already attained unto perfection in the knowledge of Christ, not by his expresse taxing of their pride and vanity, but by professing his own humility: *I count not my self to have apprehended.* 2. They who have made furthest progresse in the knowledge of Christ, are usually most sensible of their own imperfections, and most forward in the acknowledgement of them, when God's glory, and the edification of others call them unto it: So *Paul*, who (v. 10.) had nothing so much in his desires as to know Christ, and so doubtlesse knew much of him, yet standeth not again and again to acknowledge his own short-coming and ignorance: *I count not my self to have apprehended.* 3. Progresse in the knowledge of Christ, and holinesse is to be minded seriously and above all other things, not superficially, and upon the by only: so it was *Paul's one thing: this one thing I mind*, or do. 4. The approved exercise of a Christian endeavouring progresse in the way to Heaven, is much like to the carriage of those who are running in a race. First, as the runner casteth not back his eye to reckon how much of the way is already past; so the Christian who would advance to any purpose, though he may take a review of what he hath already done, so as therein not only to see his own short-comings, for humiliation, but also to see matter of praise unto God, and encouragement unto himself, *1 Cor. 15. 10.* Yet he is not so to be taken up with it, as to rest upon it, be puffed up with conceit because of it, as if he had already done enough, or any other way which may retard him in his further progresse: in which respects *Paul* did forget those things which were behinde, as if he had done nothing. Secondly, as the runner is most taken up with that part of the way which he is yet to run, and bendeth himself forward in it: So the
 Chri-

Christian who would make progresse, must be much in counting what of his way is yet before him; what sins are yet to be mortified; what duties are yet almost untouched; what hard exercises he may yet be called to undergo; and the more he seeth of that kind, he is to take the more pains for advancing forward: so was Paul reaching forth unto those things which were before.

Thirdly, as the runner holdeth his eye upon the mark, and steereth his whole course in order to it without turning aside, or, halting, because of difficulties in the way: So the Christian who would make progresse, must fix his eye upon the end of his race, which is perfection in holinesse, levelling all his actions and endeavours at that mark, pressing forward through all difficulties, discouragements and stumbling-blocks which are in the way betwixt him and it: So did Paul; *I presse toward the mark.*

4. As the thoughts of the prize and worth of the reward, do adde spirits to the runner, making him run more swiftly; so there is a rich prize, a free reward of grace, though not of merit, to wit, Heaven and glory, *Rom. 6. 23.* which the Christian who would make progresse to purpose, should have much in his thoughts; that thereby he may be heartned against all hardships and discouragements, faintings and failings, which he will be assaulted with, and tempted unto: So did Paul; *I presse for the prize of my high calling.* 5. Though Heaven and glory be given as a reward to those onely, who continue in their christian course, untill they come unto the end of the race; yet it is not merited by their running and persevering: for, as it dependeth upon their effectuall calling, which hath not its rise from man's low endeavours, but from above, even from God's high grace: so it is conveyed unto them through the merits of Jesus Christ: thus it is the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ.

Verf. 15. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

16. Nevertheless, whereas we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

In the third part of the Chapter, he exhorteth even those of them, who either had made, or seemed unto themselves to have made furthest progresse, to follow his example, and be of the same mind with him in the particulars before-mentioned: and because some of them, being seduced by the false Apostles, were of a contrary mind in some things, he giveth them ground of hope, that God, who had brought them to the knowledge of the Gospel, would reclaim them from this their error, and discover unto them the danger of it, v. 15. but withall he exhorteth them unto unity and orderly walking, according to the Canon and rule of Scripture in those things wherein they were yet harmonious, keeping mutuall love, and holding off further tents than were already made. *Doct. 1.* Though none can attain unto absolute perfection in holinesse, yet as there are several degrees in grace; so there is diversitie of growth among Christians; some are but weak, infirm, and babes in Christ, 1 Cor. 3: 1, 2. others are come to greater ripenesse, indued with a larger measure of grace, and confirmed by much experience, who being compared with the former, are here called *perfect*: *Let us as many as be perfect.* 2. The greatest perfection attainable in this life, is, to renounce all confidence in our selves, to rely wholly upon Christ, and from the sense of our own imperfection in grace, to be constantly aspiring to a greater measure: for, thus he prescribeth unto the choicest Christians to be exercised in; *Let us, as many as are perfect, be thus minded.* 3. The approven exercises of holy men mentioned in Scripture, are a clear glasse, wherein we are to see our duty & strong encouraging motives to make us go about it; examples being of more force, than bare and naked precepts: So Paul draweth an argument from his own practice: *Let*

and therefore, &c. that is, being sensible of small progress,
and of a great way yet before us, let us press forward;
for, so was he minded, as he sheweth in the preceding
verse and so would he have them minded in this verse. 4.
There are usually some within the visible Church, who,
being be-misted with error, do not come up to give
throughout unto all divine truths: Paul supponeth
so much; if in any thing ye be otherwise minded. 5. We
are to deal more tenderly with some of those who are
be-misted with error than with others; as 1. We are
to keep charity towards them, and express our charity
of them, that God who hath begun to enlighten them in
other things, would discover unto them those truths
whereof they are yet ignorant: such is the Apostles
charity here, God shall reveal even this unto you, even this,
as he had revealed other things already. Secondly, they
are to be waited on patiently, without proceeding to
the severe exercise of Discipline, untill some competent
time at least be given, wherein through Gods blessing up-
on their own endeavours, and the labours of others with
them, they may attain to the knowledge of those truths,
whereof they are ignorant: or otherwaies be made un-
excusable. This is supposed to have been Pauls mind
toward those to whom he speaketh, the Lord will reveal
even this unto you. Doct. 6. Every one who errth from
truth, is not to be used with this tendernes; as 1. not
seducers, but those who are seduced: for the Apostle
hath spoken, v. 3. and doth speak afterward otherwaies
of seducers. Secondly, it is onely those who are seduced,
not in fundamentall truths, which are absolutely neces-
sary; but in others, which are not so necessary: for, the
Apostle supponeth those, whom he would have thus
used, to have attained unto the knowledge of funda-
mentall truths according to the Canon of Scripture:
Nevertheless in what we have attained, &c. So that their
error did ly only in some circumstantial truths relating
to those greater ones; as he seemeth also to import, while
he saith, if in any thing, any be otherwise minded: besides
that,

that it appeared from the body of the Epistle, the false Apostles had prevailed with few or none in this Church to draw them on to their grossest errors. Thirdly, as their error is only in inferior truths; so, they must not be so devoted unto their own opinions, as, from a desire to propagate them, to rent the Church, and make schismes in it: but, are to walk in a joynt and orderly practice with others in those things wherein they do agree: not creating strife and division, whether in affection or practice, about those things wherein they differ; for, this may be taken as a condition of the forbearance to be given, and of God's revealing further unto them: *Nevertheless, or only if we walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing*: So there is no ground here for a boundlesse toleration of all hereticks, sect-masters, seducers of others; nor yet to all those who are seduced; except their carriage do evidence them to be studious both of truth and peace. *Doth. 7.* As it is only God who can reveal truth unto those who are over-taken with error, by his blessing upon ordinary means, made use of for that purpose: so there are promising grounds of hope that he will do so unto some, to wit, those unto whom he hath discovered many soul-saving truths already, and who are labouring by their orderly walking according unto those truths, to edifie both themselves and others: *Pauls hope is, that God will reveal even this unto them*; not by any immediate revelation, or any other way without the Word; but by his blessing upon the Word preached, and their own endeavours. *Isa. 8. 20.* And that because he had revealed much unto them already, imported in the words *even this*, or, also this, and withall subjoyneth the condition, *whereunto we have attained, let us walk*; to wit, unity and orderly, as soldiers keeping rank, without disturbing one another. 7. The Church of Christ, ought not upon every difference of judgement, to be rent in Schismes and Factions, setting up a Church against a Church, or, using,rosse endeavours, for under-minding and down-bearing of one another;

another; but unity and orderly practice according to an uncontroverted rule, so far as is possible, is to be kept notwithstanding of different judgments: for this the Apostle exhorteth unto; *Let us walk by the same rule.* 8. Upon divided practice, because of different opinions in a Church, there doth necessarily follow further division and renting, both in judgment and affections: for, Paul having exhorted unto joynt practice, he subjoyneth, *Let us minde the same thing;* that is, Let us keep unity, both of affection and judgment, to wit, in those things wherein we do yet agree; importing, this cannot be, except there be a joynt practice.

Verf. 17. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an example.

He repeateth the former exhortation, that they would follow his example; and encourageth them from this, That he was not his alone; many faithfull Servants of Christ did walk as he did; whose example he propoundeth unto them as a mark to aim at. *Doff. 1.* As the examples of holy men, registred in Scripture, are to be imitated by us, to wit, so far as they have been followers of Christ, *1 Cor. 11. 1.* so we are to be followers together of them; every one helping up another, and far from falling in rents among our selves, under pretence of giving respect to men, some more to one, and others more to another, *1 Cor. 1. 12.* this the Apostle aimeth at, while he saith, *be followers together of me.* 2. As there are some whose steps are to be followed, and whose way in order thereunto is to be diligently eyed, as the scope which the archer aimeth at; (for so the Greek word, rendered *Mark*, doth signifie) So, it is not every one we should so imitate, but those only who have walked in the steps of the holy Apostles, and other choice Servants of Christ: *Mark them,* saith he, *which walk so,* but how? *as ye have us for an example.* 3. However the way of God be in it self lovely, and worthy to be chosen, *Psal.*

19. 7. though few or none did walk in it: *John. 14. 29.* yet that this way is made a beaten path by the multitude of those who have made it their choice, is no small encouragement and motive to make us walk in it: every example being as a standing witness to confirm from experience, that all which Scripture speaketh of that way, is real truth, *Heb. 12. 1.* for, so he draweth an encouragement from this, That not only he, but divers others did walk in that way: *Mark. them that walk so.* *Mark. 16.* (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the crosse of Christ:

39. *Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly; and whose glory is in their shame, who minde earthly things.)*

But he giveth reasons to enforce the exhortation. 1. There were many, whose example was not to be followed, to wit, the false Apostles: From following of whom, that he may deter them, as he had often before, so he doth now in great grief (as seeing the Church of Christ pestered with such false Teachers) point them forth to their blackest colours: First, As being enemies to the crosse of Christ, because they opposed the vertue of Christ's sufferings, by which alone salvation is obtained, *Gal. 5. 2.* and because they pressed the observation of the Levitical Ceremonies, that gratifying the Jews thereby, they might shift Christ's crosse, for persecution for the Gospel, *Gal. 6. 12.* Secondly, Eternal destruction should be their reward, if they persisted in that damnable doctrine, without repentance. Thirdly, They were beastly belly-gods; as being acted not from a principle of love to God, or to the salvation of men, but their own fleshy appetite, that they might have wherewith to fill their bellies, *Rom. 16. 18.* Fourthly, They gloried in their wickedness, and in the multitude of these whom they had perverted, *Gal. 6. 13.* whereof they should rather have been ashamed, and which in the end should turn unto their

their shame. And finally, all their endeavours reached no higher, than things earthly, richer, honour, pleasure, applause, and such like; while as Heaven, and things heavenly (however much pretended unto) were little minded by them: And so he leadeth them so gather, that such were men not worthy to be followed. *Deff. 1.* The Lord doth sometimes suffer Seducers to multiply in a Church, thus to punish the small respect which hath been given to Truth. *2 Thess. 2. 10. 11.* and that those who are approved, may be made manifest, *1 Cor. 11. 19.* for many walk, &c. 2. The abounding of such Seducers ought not in reason to detract any thing from the respect which is due unto sincere and orthodox Preachers; yea, such will be the more esteemed of by all sincere lovers of truth: for, Paul maketh this a reason, why such men as he should be imitated; *Be followers together of me, 1 Cor. 11. 1.* for many walk, saith he, that are enemies, &c. 3. It is the duty of Christ's faithful Ministers, to give frequent warning unto the Lord's People of their hazard from spreaders of Errors and wicked Seducers, pointing them out in the blackest colours; that people may not be infected by them: so doth Paul here; *Of whom I have told you, and now tell you, they are enemies of the crosse of Christ.* 4. What ever Ministers do of this kind, ought not to flow from hatred or evil-will to the persons of men, a desire of venting reproaches, petulancy of spirit, or such like, *Jude 9.* but from pure zeal to the Churches weal, and from grief of heart to see the Church of Christ perverted by them: thus was it with Paul; *of whom, saith he, I do now tell you, even weeping.* 4. In times of tryal for Truth, there will not be some wanting (and those in no small reputation for piety and parts) who are carried on to embrace those Opinions in the matter of Religion, which lie furthest off the dint of persecution, even although these Opinions be erroneous and destructive to the doctrine of the Gospel; for so, and in those respects those men were enemies to the crosse of Christ. 5. Not only doth profanity and vice draw down destruction

and wrath upon those who live in them, Col. 3: 6. but also Errors against Truth are damnable, and bring destruction, if not repented of, chiefly to the malicious authors and factious spreaders of them, for base designs, faired over with fair pretences, Rom. 16. 17, 18. So saith the Apostle of those masters of Error, *whose end is destruction.* 6. That is interpretatively a mans God; which is the last end of all his actions; and upon which all his care, his thoughts and endeavours run most, whether it be a mans belly, the world, his credit or friends: hence it is said, *whose God is their belly.* 7. There are many who pretend fair for God, and the good of souls, and yet will be really found to be but self-seekers, making a net of a fair outside, to catch worldly pleasures, riches and honours: and this is most frequently to be found in those who spread Errors; *Whose God is their belly, they mind earthly things.* 8. The chief endeavour of those who walk in a sinful way, (chiefly in a course of error) and the thing which they hunt most after, as their highest credit and glory, is, to have many carried along with them in it; for, this was their glory here spoken of; *whose glory is in their shame.* 9. The Lord shall sooner or later make that same very thing, wherein such men glory most, to be their shame, either by making them to be truly ashamed of it, as a fruit of their repentance, Rom. 6. 21, or by rubbing shame upon them for it here, or hereafter, as the just reward of their sin, Hos. 4. 7. in which respects he affirmeth of them, *whose glory is in their shame.*

Verf. 20. For our conversation is in Heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ:

21. Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Here is a second reason exciting them to imitate the Apostle and such as he was. Their conversation and expected reward were much different from that of the false Apostles;

Apostles; and therefore as the latter were to be eschewed, the former were to be followed. As to their conversation, it was not on things earthly, but in Heaven, and that because Christ their head, their glory, their happiness, is there, whom they did expect to come one day from thence, not as a terrible Judge, but as a tender-hearted Saviour, ver. 20. And as for their reward, it should not be destruction, but salvation and glory: their bodies (for the present, vile, humble and low, as being obnoxious to death, corruption and a deluge of miseries, 1 Cor. 15. 42, 43.) should be changed by the Lord Christ, so that being freed from these base qualities, and endued with the contrary glorious ones, 1 Cor. 15. 42, 43. they should be made conform to Christs glorious body. And lest any should look on such a change as impossible, he leadeth them unto the consideration of Christs divine power, whereby he will destroy death, and the grave, and subject all things unto himself; and so can easily work that glorious change in our vile bodies, v. 21. *Doth.* The conversation of those, who would have themselves propounded as Patrons for imitation by others, ought to be such, as that of the Apostle was; who, exciting the Philippians to follow him, giveth this for a reason, *Our conversation is in Heaven.* 2. Believers have right to Heaven, as to their City, Faith being the Burgesse-Ticket which giveth an interest in the Priviledges of it; *Job. 3. 36. We have our conversation in Heaven,* or, *We do live as Free-Burgesses of that City,* so will the Original bear. 3. They are therefore to converse and live as free Denizens of that City, so, that though they be mixed with Hypocrites, *Matth. 13. 30.* and carry about earthly bodies, 2 Cor. 5. 1. standing in need of earthly sustentation, and subject also to the common calamities of an earthly life, 1 Cor. 15. 44. Yet with their heart and affections they are to be aspiring daily towards Heaven, *Col. 3. 1.* living in all things so, as it becometh those who have present right unto it, and one day shall get full possession of it, 1 *Job. 3. 3.* for, so lived the Apostle; *We*
have

have the conversation in Heaven, or, We do live as Free-
 Burgesses of that City. 4. Jesus Christ in his bodily
 presence, is now in Heaven, and not in Earth; for, saith
 he, *from whence we look for a Saviour*. 5. Jesus Christ
 at the end of time is to come from Heaven, and judge the
 world, 2 Tim. 4. 1. *from whence we look*, &c. 6. This
 second coming of his, although it be abhorred, and hated
 by wicked Atheists, Act. 24. 25. he being to come unto
 them as a terrible Judge, 2 Thess. 1. 8. yet it is the mar-
 ter of the Godlie expectation; a thing hoped for, and
 much longed after by them: *from whence also we look*.
 7. The reason why his second coming is so much looked
 for by the Godly, is, Because he is to come, not as a sin-
 pursuing Judge unto them, but as a Saviour with per-
 fect salvation, and healing under his wings: *We look for*
a Saviour. See Heb. 9. 28. 8. The consideration of this,
 That Christ is in Heaven, and to come as a Saviour from
 thence, hath an Adamantine vertue to draw up the
 thoughts and affections of the Believer thither: for, this
 is given as a reason why their conversation was in Hea-
 ven; *from whence we expect a Saviour*, saith he. 9. Our
 bodies now since the fall, (Gen. 3. 19.) are vile and base,
 liable to death and corruption, to several sores and sick-
 nesses; *our vile body*. 10. That vilenesse and basenesse
 which is in our mortal bodies, is properly *ours*, as being
 contracted by our sin, by which they were brought down
 from that glory wherein they were created, Rom. 5. 12.
 Thus *our vile body*, or, (as it is in the Original) *bodies of*
our vileness: the vilenesse is more ours, than the bodies
 are. 11. The bodies of Believers, however they be now
 vile and base, and subject to as many miseries as the bo-
 dies of others are; yea, and are liable to the crosse for
 Christ, Matth. 10. 18. which the bodies of the wicked
 are not, Gal. 6. 12. yet Christ in the last day shall work
 a glorious change in them, a change, not in their sub-
 stance and proportion of members; for we shall still
 have an organick body with distinct members, Job, 19.
 27. but delivered from those base and low qualities
 which

which sin hath subjected them unto ; and adorned with the contrary glorious qualities. such as immortality, 1 Cor. 15. 42. and splendor, 1 Cor. 15. 43. impassibility, 1 Cor. 15. 44. and agility and lightness, 1 Thess. 4. 17. So that neither sickness, pain, hunger, or death shall be able to assault our glorified bodies, *Matth. 23. 30.* This is the change here spoken of : *Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.* 12. Though the body of Christ now in Heaven be glorious, being adorned with as much glory as a created body can be capable of ; yet it is not indued with the essential properties of God, so as to be omnipotent. or omnipresent : (as the *Ubigitaries* do affirm) for our bodies shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body : and yet none can rationally assert, That they shall be adorned with any of the essential properties of God. 13. The resurrection of our bodies, and transforming of them thus gloriously after they shall be turned unto dust, and eaten with worms, *Job, 19. 26.* as it is a thing almost incredible, and to flesh and blood wholly impossible, *Act. 17. 32.* so the consideration and faith of divine omnipotency, which is engaged to bring it about, will make all doubts of that kind vanish, as knowing nothing is impossible unto God : so Paul, that he may confirm them in the faith of this great point, leadeth them to the power of God, according to his working, whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. 14. There is nothing within the reach of divine omnipotency which shall be left untried, rather than the Believers glory, both in soul and body, should remain uncompleted : for which he saith, *whereby he is able* : it is supposed, that if it be within the compass of divine ability, it shall be done.

C H A P. I V.

IN the first part of this chapter, *Paul* exhorteth the *Philippians* unto some christian virtues, to wit, To constancy, v. 1. to concord, v. 2, 3. to rejoyce in the Lord, v. 4. to moderation of minde, v. 5. to beware of anxious heart-cutting diffident care, and to give themselves to prayer and praises, v. 6. for so they should have much of Gods peace, v. 7. and generally, to every thing which was praise-worthy, v. 8. which he inforceth from his own example, and the fruit which should follow hereupon, v. 9.

In the second part, he commendeth them for their benevolence towards him in his strait, excusing the delay, v. 10. and cleareth himself from dejectednesse of spirit under want, v. 11, 12, 13. and yet sheweth their gratuity was acceptable, v. 14. which he amplifieth by mentioning their liberality towards him in former times, v. 15, 16. and purgeeth himself from an indirect intention to excite them to the bestowing of more, v. 17. shewing what he had already received did abundantly satisfie him, v. 18. for which their gratuity, he promisethto unto them a recompence from God, v. 19.

In the third part he concludeth the Epistle, first, with a doxology, v. 20. Secondly, with some mutual salutations, v. 21, 22. And thirdly, with his usual farewell-wish, v. 23.

Verf. 1. Therefore, my Brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

FROM what *Paul* hath said in the former chapter, he inferreth a vehement exhortation, inforced by a number of affectionate compellations, That they would remain constant in the doctrine and practice of the Gospel,

so as they had done hitherto, and as he had presently prescribed, chap. 3. *DoB. 1.* So ready are we to weary in well-doing, *Gal. 5. 7.* so unwearied is the Tempter in his assaulting of us, what by reiterating old tentations, what by presenting us with new ones, *1 Pet. 5. 8.* That even those, who for a long time have given great proof of their constancy both in profession of Truth, and practice of Duties, are not so far beyond the reach of backsliding, but they stand in need of frequent and vehement exhortations to make them stand on their guard against it: So *Paul* exhorteth those *Philippians* to constancy, notwithstanding they had already given large proof of it; *so stand fast in the Lord.* 2. The faith of glory, and rich reward which is laid up to those who persevere unto the end, is a strong motive unto constancy and perseverance: so, from what the Apostle spake in the close of chap. 3. of that glorious change to be wrought upon the bodies of Believers, he inferreth, *So stand fast.* 3. As a peoples profiting by the Ministry of the Word, ought to indear them unto a faithful Pastor; so a Minister may, without imputation of flattery, make it known unto the people, and that in the most pathetic way, how much they are esteemed of by him; that hereby he may excite them to further progresse. And this use only should be made by people of the approbation of their faithful discerning Pastors, or of any other whose approbation they think worthy to put a price upon: Thus the Apostle here gives them a number of affectionate compellations, all of them breathing forth his respect and love unto them, such as *Brethren*, as being professors of the same faith; *dearly beloved*, being such as for their piety had much room in his heart; *and longed for*, his absence from whom was his burden; *my joy*, the remembrance of whom made him sing under all his sufferings; and *my crown*, they were as an ornament unto him, his glory and diadem, being gained to Christ by his Ministry, and having remained constant, when others had fallen away.

Verf. 1. I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same minde in the Lord.

3. And I intreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women which laboured with me in the Gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life.

He speaketh to two women, who being of some note in that Church, did in some things, as appeareth, relating to Religion, differ as well the one from the other, as both of them from the Doctrine publicly professed in that Church; Then he exhorteth, that laying aside their contention and strife, they would endeavour peace and unity betwixt themselves, such as God would approve of, *ver. 2.* And because divisions of that kind are not easily composed, he exhorteth some one of his once-fellow-labourers in that Church, to contribute his endeavours for helping them to union, because they had been useful to him in their stations, while he was preaching the Gospel, and planting a Church at Philippi, with one *Clement*, and some other private Christians; all which in charity he did judge to be truly gracious, and in the number of Gods Elect Children. *Doct. 1.* It is the duty of Pastors to instruct, exhort, rebuke and comfort, not only the whole Church in general, but also particular persons by name, as occasion offereth, and their necessity requireth: so doth *Paul*, *I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche.* 2. Difference of judgment among professors, in things relating to Religion, is of dangerous consequence, as being an occasion of strife and discord, of alienation of heart and affections, *2 Cor. 12. 20.* as causing hurtfull diversions from that which should be our main work, to waste our precious time, and the edge of our spirits upon things lesse necessary; *1 Tim. 1. 4.* *Paul* looks upon this difference as worthy to be taken notice of, even by an Apostle; *I beseech*, saith he. 3. It is very casual for such differences to fall in among professors, who have been other wise pious and useful in the Lords work: thus
Euodias,

Euodias and Syntyche, who helped Paul in the Gospel, falleth at odds among themselves: I beseech Euodias, &c.
 4. Peace and unity in the Church, and among all the members of the Church, is a thing much to be studied for and sought after: *I beseech they be of the same minde.*
 5. But by all means it would be seen to, That the composing of the Churches differences be an union in the Lord, and such as he will approve of: *so be beseecheth them to be of one minde, but, in the Lord.* 6. We ought to make use of our familiarity with, and interest in others, to set them upon employments honourable unto God, and profitable unto the Church of Christ, and the true members thereof, so far as their station will permit, and their abilities can reach: so Paul maketh use of his intirenesse with one above the rest (whom he calleth his *true-yokefellow*, because, as appears, of their being joyntly employed in the work of the Ministry, as Oxen drawing under one yoke) to set him upon the reconciling of those two, who were at distance, *and I intreat thee also true yoke-fellow.* 7. As Church-divisions, though easily fallen into (*Act. 15. 37, &c.*) are not easily cured; so it is the duty of all, who have power and parts, to employ them all for the curing of them, and this especially, when the scandalous rent is among such who have been reputed gracious, and have proved steadable to the work of God in their several stations: hence he exhorteth to help those women to union, because they had *laboured with him in the Gospel.* 8. As the Gospel, when it first cometh in power to a place, meeteth with no small opposition; so it is the duty, not only of Ministers, but also of private Christians, and that of both sexes, keeping still their own stations, *1 Cor. 14. 34.* to contribute their uttermost for making of the Gospel successfull: so did they at Philippi, *who laboured with me in the Gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers*; the word rendered *laboured*, signifieth to strive as wrestlers, who make use of all their strength. What their labour was, is not expressed, but certainly it was such as became them

in their stations. 9. The Lord knoweth who are his with as great certainty, as a man knoweth those of his family, whose names he hath written in a book: so much is imported by this phrase, *whose names are written in the book of life*; not that God hath, or standeth in need of any such book for the help of his memory; the speech is only metaphorical, bearing this much, That God hath fore-ordained them to life, and so knoweth certainly they shall be saved, as if their names were all inrolled. See 2 Tim. 2. 19. 10. Though none can passe a certain and infallible judgment upon others, whether they belong to the election of grace, or not, *Rom. 14. 4.* yet there may, and ought to be a judgment of charity passed upon all, and every one of such, as elected and chosen, whom we see constant in the doctrine of Faith, studying to be holy themselves, and contributing their utmost for promoting the work of God among others; for Paul, from the judgment of charity, pronounceth of such, *whose names are written in the book of life.*

Verf. 4. Rejoyce in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoyce.

He exhorteth most earnestly that they would not suffer themselves to be drawn off from that necessary duty of rejoycing in the Lord, pressed chap. 3. v. 1. But that under all conditions, and at all times they would make conscience of it. *Deff. 1.* It is not only the Lords allowance, but also his command unto his people, which they are to obey, under hazard of disobedience, *to rejoyce in the Lord*, that is, from the consideration of the excellency of Christ in himself, *Cant. 5. 10, &c.* and his usefulness unto them, *Psal. 118. 1.* together with their interest in him, *Cant. 2. 16.* and the observation of his providence and care towards them, *1 Sam. 17. 37.* to keep their own hearts, not only free from anxiety and discouragement, but feeding also upon the sense and sweetnesse which floweth from all those considerations: for, this is the duty

duty of *rejoycing in the Lord*, which he here preſſeth.
 2. This is a duty conſtantly to be made conſcience of under all caſes and conditions, whether prosperous or adverſe : there being alwayes grounds of rejoycing to the believer, though not in the world, nor in himſelf, yet in the Lord, and in what the word holdeth forth of him, *Job. 16. 33.* if he by his own untender walking, or miſbelieving diſcouragement, do not mar his acceſſe to the right uſe-making of thoſe grounds, *Pſal. 42. 11. Rejoyce alwayes* ſaith he. 3. It is not eaſie to work up the heart to the conſcientious practice of this duty, eſpecially at all times: hence he doubleth the exhortation, thereby pointing out how averſe we are from this duty: *Rejoyce alwayes, and again I ſay rejoyce.*

Verſ. 5. Let your moderation be known unto all men : The Lord is at hand.

He further exhorteth them in all their affairs to the exerciſe of moderation, whereby they ſhould rather remit ſomewhat of what was their right according to the rule of ſtrict juſtice, then do any reall hurt unto others, and that becauſe of Gods preſence, to wit, by his providence preſently, and by his ſecond comming to judge the world, before it be long. *Doct. 1.* It is the duty of Chriſtians, not alwayes to exact the rigour of what in ſtrict Law they may claim unto, whether in ſeeking reparation of injuries, *Col. 3. 13.* and repayment of debts, *Ex. 22. 25, 26.* or in uſe-making of recreations, and any of their allowed liberties *Gal. 5. 13.* but are to remit ſomewhat of their right, as the neceſſity of their neighbour, *Ex. 22. 25, 26.* or his edification calleth for it, *Rom. 14. 21.* for this is the moderation here exhorted unto, *let your moderation be known.* 2. However Chriſtians are not to hunt after applauſe or vain-glory, by ſetting forth the good things which are in them to the publick view, *Mat. 6. 1. 6. 18.* yet they are not under pretence of eſchewing that evil

or the suspicion of it, to cover all they do from the view of others; but are bound to make their good works manifest, that others therein may see their duty, and have matter of blessing God on their behalf: See *Matth. 5. 16.* *Let your moderation be known, &c.* 3. The fore-mentioned advantages by making our good works manifest, are most effectually produced, not so much by speaking of the good which we do, as when the work speaketh for it self unto those who do behold it, and chiefly unto such as find benefit by it: thus they were to *make their moderation known unto all men*, to wit, by giving reall proof of it. 4. Although these duties flowing from intimate society and near relations, be due onely to such, who stand under those relations unto us, *1 Tim. 5. 8.* yet none, whether good or bad, are to be excluded from their just interest in those duties which are grounded upon common equity, such as are duties of charity, justice, mercy and condescendence unto humane infirmity: of which sort is this moderation here spoken of: *let your moderation be known to all men.* 5. God is still present by his providence for the help of those that fear him, *Psal. 145. 18.* and is hastning unto his second coming, when he shall judge the world in righteousness, *Rev. 22. 20.* *The Lord is at hand.* 6. The consideration and faith of Gods nearnesse, as said is, may incourage Christians much to the exercise of moderation in all their affairs, as knowing whatever present prejudice they may sustain by their christian condescendencie in remitting somewhat of their own right, rather than to hurt or scandalize others, it will be abundantly made up by the providence of God working for them in the mean time, and his compleat righting of all wrongs in the day of his second coming, *Mark 10. 29, 30.* for, this is the argument, where-by he presseth moderation: *The Lord is at hand.*

Vers. 6. Be carefull for nothing: but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

Here

Here is a further exhortation to beware of anxious heart-cutting diffident care, about things worldly, and the successe of what we do undertake in our lawfull Callings: for curing whereof he prescribeth this remedie, that in the conscientious use of their Callings, they would have recourse unto God by prayer, wherein by supplicating for good things, by deprecating deserved wrath, and thankfull acknowledgement of mercies already received, they might pour out their hearts in Gods bosome, leaving the disposall of all their affairs upon him: *Doct. 1.* However there be a lawfull care about things worldly not prohibited, but frequently commanded, *Rom. 12. 11.* Yet there is a care not lawfull, to wit, when a man exceedeth in care; and so, as to care for nothing but the world, *Psal. 49. 11.* and so, as to keep himself upon a continuall rack, as fearing want of successe in what he doth, *Psal. 37. 5.* and so, as to joyn issue with any thing, though never so sinfull, for preserving or bringing about the thing cared for, *1 Tim. 6. 9.* This excessive care is sinfull, and here forbidden; *be carefull in nothing.* 2. As this excessive care doth hinder the exercise of moderation, by driving men to the utmost of rigour in all their dealings with others, as fearing, lest by the smallest condescendencie, they undo themselves: so nothing contributeth more to make a man mercifull, gentle, and condescending to the necessity and good of others, though even to his own seeming prejudice, than to keep his heart above this anxious, vexing, diffident and heart-cutting care: hence unto the former exhortation of making their *moderation known to all men*, he subjoyneth this as an help, *be carefull in nothing.* 3. The best remedie against this excessive diffident care, is, not to run upon the other extreame of casting by all lawfull care and diligence, *Matth. 4. 7.* but that in the conscientious use of our lawfull employments, we make our addresse unto God by prayer, deprecating deserved wrath, asking for desired successe, blessing him for favours already received, and so to leave the burden of all our care upon

on him: this is it which the Apostle prescribeth; *but in every thing by supplication and prayer, &c.* 4. All our Prayers would be so composed, as that they may be known to God; that is, approved of him, and so proceeding from the sense of our want. *1 Kings 8. 38.* put up in the Name of Christ. *John 16. 23.* and for things according to his will, *1 Job. 5. 14.* *Let your requests be made known unto God.* 5. There are severall sorts of Prayers set forth here, by three distinct expressions; for the word *requests*, is generall to all the kindes: First, there is *Prayer*, whereby we seek those things which we want from God, acknowledging how unworthy we are of them. Secondly, there is *supplication*, whereby we deprecate evils and judgements, whether felt or feared, acknowledging our sins, whereby we have deserved them. Thirdly, there is *thanks-giving*, whereby we blesse God for favours already bestowed; by *prayer, and supplication, and thanksgiving.* 6. Blessing of God for favours received, is necessary to be joyned with prayer and supplication, there being constant matter of thanksgiving under all conditions, *v. 11.* and to suppress that fretting, quarrelling, and impatient humour, which often venteth it self against God in our prayers and supplications, where thanksgiving to God for favours received, is not joyned with them, *Psal. 77. 7.* compared with *v. 10. 11.* Hence the Apostle commandeth, *but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be known unto God.*

Verf. 7. And the peace of God. which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and mindes through Christ Jesus.

For enforcing the former exhortation, he subjoyneth a promise, that upon their so doing, *the peace of God* (a mystery so deep, that it transcendeth the reach of naturall reason) should, as with a guard of armed souldiers, defend their understandings, will and affections, against the

the assault of any temptation, which might otherwayes drive them to discouragement, and vexing diffident eares and fears of suffering from men, upon their exercise of moderation in all their actions. *Doct. 1.* There is a calmnesse and tranquility of spirit attainable by believers, flowing from their peace made with God in justification, and wrought in a believer by the Spirit of God, (hence it is called, *the peace of God*) which goeth beyond the reach of all created understanding to comprehend, it being a thing almost incredible, that those who are most under the lash of divine rods, should yet have Gods peace; who of all others are most tossed with storms & tempests, should yet enjoy a sweet calm in their own mind; who are often destitute of all things, should yet be as little anxious, as if they enjoyed all things. A Christian is made up thus, of so many seeming contraries, that no wonder the Apostle doth speak here of this *peace of God as passing all understanding.* 2. This peace of God cannot be preserved, but in the due practice of commanded duties, especially in the exercise of prayer: for, it's promised, if they be diligent in prayer, *v. 16. the peace of God shall guard their hearts.* 3. Where this peace is intertained, it doth marvellously guard the whole soul, wit, will and affections from being overcome by, or disquieted much with the apprehension of losses or injuries, whether felt or feared: This peace with God, and with a mans own conscience in God, is of such excellent worth, that so long as it is enjoyed, no other losse is much valued; for, it's promised as a guard against the fore-mentioned heart-cutting care; *The peace of God shall guard your hearts.* 4. All that is in man, especially his soul, and every faculty of it, is as so many patent ports to receive most dangerous temptations, so that there must be a guard set to defend every one of them, otherwayes the temptation getteth most ready passage: thus much is imported, while he saith, *the peace of God shall keep, or guard your hearts,* that is, the will and affection; and *minds,* that is, the understanding: It is a Metaphore

taphore taken from Military affairs, where Guards of Souldiers are placed at the Ports of Cities, or weaker parts of the walls, to stop the Enemies entry. 3. However preservation against the onsets of temptation, be a promised fruit of diligence in the use of prescribed means: yet all the efficacie of those means cometh through Jesus Christ and his vertue working with them, who therefore would be eyed above means: hence this safety from the temptation, though promised upon their diligence in prayer; yet it is *through Jesus Christ*.

Verf. 8. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any vertue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Because those Christians at Philippi lived among Heathens, in whom there were some things worthy of imitation, as many other things were not; therefore the Apostle exhorted them to severall things, relating chiefly to the adorning of Religion, and making of it lovely unto those Heathens; and particularly that they would diligently consider, and from consideration, imitate every thing among them, which was *true, honest, just, pure, and of good report*: providing only, that those things of *good report*, were not vices, but reall vertues, and so, truly worthy of praise. *Dott. 1.* It is the duty of Christians, especially of those who live among haters of Religion, and such as seek all occasions to speak evill of it, to see themselves to search, find out, and, as it were, to cast their accompt by what means and carriage they may adorn Religion most, and make it lovely unto others, and accordingly to carry themselves in all things: so, while he is exhorting those Philippians to adorn Religion by their carriage, he injoyneth them to *think on these things*; the word signifieth, to search out a thing diligently, by

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comparing one with another, as Accompters use to do.
 2. Christians are not to be so scrupulous as to reject things true, and in themselves good, though professed and practised by men, who are otherways extremely bad: so, he exhorteth them to *think upon*, and imitate every thing which was true and honest, even among the the Heathens. 3. It is the duty of Christians, to discern truth from error, rejecting the latter, and adhering to the former, *Ephes. 4. 14, 15.* to speak nothing but truth in their ordinary communication, *Eph. 4. 25.* and to perform what they promise, *Psal. 15. 4.* for, they are to *think upon whatever things are true*. 4. It is the duty of Christians so to walk, as by the whole strain of their carriage, they may gain respect to their persons and profession from others, all their conversation favouring of nothing but gravity, as being far from scurrility, lightnesse and vanity in their apparell, words, deeds, and all their behaviour, *1 Tim. 2. 9, 10.* for those are things honest, or grave, as it is in the Originall, which he exhorteth them to consider. 5. Christians ought to consider, and accordingly to perform what things are just, that is, whatever we are bound to do unto others, whether to God or man, *Matth. 22. 21.* whether by the Law of Nature, *1 Tim. 5. 8.* or of Nations, *Ruth 3. 13.* by reason of our place or station, *Neb. 6. 11.* whether the things we owe be determined by paction, as such a sum of money, or so much grain, *Col. 4. 1.* or onely to be determined according to the rules of prudence, equity, or charity, *Col. 4. 1.* whether it be fear or honour, *Rom. 13. 7.* goodwill, *Rom. 13. 8.* or somewhat further: so as none be defrauded of that which is his own; for those are the things just, which he willeth them to *think upon*. 6. Christians who would adorn the Gospel, must study purity and chastity in all the parts of their conversation, being far from any thing in their words or actions, which may favour of obscenity, or any bitter root of uncleannesse within, *Eph. 4. 29.* for those are the things pure, or chaste, which he exhorteth them to *think upon*. 7. However Christians are not to venture

venture on things sinful, for humouring of those among whom they converse, *2 Pet. 2. 7, 8.* yet they are bound, in so far as with a good conscience they can, to commend their persons and profession, even to wicked men, by their lovely, affable, and condescending carriage, *Tis. 3. 2, 3.* for, those are the *things lovely*, which he willetteth them to minde. 8. Though Christians are not to hunt after the applause of men, *Gal. 1. 10.* yet, lest the Gospel be evil spoken of through them, and they in capacity to serve God in their stations by doing good unto others, they are to walk so as they may be deservedly spoken well of, eschewing every thing which tendeth to make their names stink and unfavoury unto others, *1 Pet. 2. 12.* hence he commandeth them to *minde things that are of good report.* 9. A Christian may not presently close with every thing which is well reported of, or may gain applause unto himself among those with whom he liveth, *Luke 16. 15.* But except the thing in it self be the exercise of some vertue, and truly worthy of praise, he is to reject it and abhor it, although it be never so much cried up by others; for, he exhorteth them to mind those *things which are of good report*, but with this caution, *if there be any vertue or praise in them.*

Verf. 9. Those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

He presseth the former exhortation, 1. from his own example; he had both preached and practised those things, as they themselves were witnesses. 2. From the fruit following; hereby they should enjoy more constant communion with God, and more of that inward peace, whereof God is author. *Doct. 1.* It is the duty of Ministers, who would prove faithful, to be much in pressing upon their hearers the substantial duties of Religion, not insisting so much upon notional cases, or any other thing relating lesse to peoples practice, *Tis. 3. 9.* Of the former

mer sort were those, spoken of, ver. 8. which to inculcate by preaching, was one great part of the Apostles task, as appeareth from the many expressions here used: *Those things which ye have both learned, received, and heard.* 2. It is the duty of Ministers, not only to presse duties by preaching, but to practise what they so presse by a holy life, whereby people may see that in them, which they hear from them, see 1 Tim. 4. 12. So did Paul, *Ye have both learned and seen in me.* 3. A people are the more bound, and should be the more stirred up to go about commanded duties, that they are under a Minister, whose doctrine is lively and his life exemplary: for, Paul maketh his practice an argument to excite them to their duty; *Those things which ye have both learned, and seen in me.* 4. A Christian keeping himself in the exercise of good works, and practice of commanded duties, may expect much of Gods gracious presence, and of that tranquillity and peace of minde, whereof God is the author, under the strongest tossings of turbulent times: for he inforceth this exhortation, *Those things do,* from this promise, *the God of peace shall be with you.*

Verf. 10. *But I rejoyced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again, wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.*

In the second part of the chapter, the Apostle sheweth how much he rejoyced at, and was affected with their benevolence sent unto him, after so long delay of time; excusing also the delay, as imputing it to the calamity of the times, which deprived them of an opportunity, and not to want of good-will in them, which he did never question. *Doth.* 1. As it is the lot of most eminent Christians sometimes to stand in need of help and supply from others: so it is their duty thankfully to acknowledge those whom God hath made helpful unto them in their strait: so doth the Apostle here, *But I rejoyced in the Lord greatly, &c.* 2. A spiritual heart and wise observer of

of providence, will find matter of much joy in God, and of praise unto him, even in those things which to an ordinary eye would not seem to be of so much worth: so *Paul* looketh upon this gratuity as a matter of rejoicing in the Lord greatly, because he saw much more in it than the thing it self, to wit, A reviving of the root of grace in these fruits of charity, which before appeared as withered and gone; *I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, saith he, that your care of me hath flourished.* 3. Though there may be in those who are truly gracious, a sad cessation from the exercise of grace, sometimes through want of opportunity, as here, and sometimes also through their falling into several sins, *2 Sam. 11.* 4. yet the seed of God remaineth in them, there is life and sap at the root, which through Gods blessing in due time will bud up and bring forth the former fruit; *now at last your care of me hath flourished*; the word is borrowed from trees, which seem in Winter to be dead and withered, and in the Spring revive again. 4. How long soever a mercy be delayed, and postponed, a godly heart will see in it matter of thanksgiving both to God, and also to those from whom as instruments, the mercy is conveyed: so did *Paul*, *I rejoiced, that now at last your care of me hath flourished.* 5. It were the wisdom of Gods people to watch for the opportunity of doing good, and make use of it; seeing even those who would do good may ere long be deprived of opportunity to do it: *ye were careful, but ye lacked opportunity.* 6. The want of an opportunity, not through our default, doth excuse and justify the forbearance, for a time, of a positive duty, if so good-will be present, see *2 Cor. 8. 12.* from this, *Paul* excuseth them, *ye wanted opportunity*, saith he. 7. It is the part of christian charity to excuse, so far as prudence will permit, that which may seem to be the neglect of others, expounding things doubtfull favourably, and imputing their omissions to the want, not of good-will, but of opportunity: so doth *Paul*, *wherein ye were careful, but ye wanted opportunity.*

Ver. 11. *Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

12. *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where, and in all things I am instructed, both to be full, and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.*

13. *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

Left they had mistaken the Apostle, as if his so much joy for their gratuity had argued him to have been of a dejected spirit through reason of want; he clears himself, denying his joy to have proceeded from any thing of that kind, and that because he was gifted from God with full contentment under every condition, ver. 11. and so he reckoneth several particular conditions, under which he had learned to live contentedly at all times, and in all places: As first, under disgrace, and abundance of worldly applause. Secondly, store of meat and drink, and utter scarcity and want. Thirdly, under his abounding generally in all things necessary for food, raiment, lawfull pleasures and recreations, and a sparing measure of all those things, ver. 12. And lest, by what is said, he might be looked upon as a vain arrogant boaster, he pointeth at the fountain from whence he was furnished, to wit. The power and vertue of Jesus Christ inabling him, ver. 13. *Dott. 1.* A seeker of God, especially a Christian Minister, would be careful, lest he do, or say any thing whereby he may incur the suspicion of being too much desirous of things worldly, or of being too much dejected and cast down through the want of them: there being nothing which maketh the Gospel to be worse spoken of, than the sin of Covetousnesse in the Preachers, or Professors of it: hence Paul doth so carefully clear his former words from favouring of any thing of that kind; *not that I speak in respect of want*, saith he,

2. The Child of God is subject to change of conditions in things outward, being sometimes in credit, sometimes in disgrace; sometimes rich, sometimes poor; sometimes sick, sometimes in health; sometimes injoying all things necessary for his sustentation and life, sometimes almost wholly deprived of them: so was it with *Paul*, *I know how to be abased, and how to abound, &c.* 3. Whatever be the several changes, wherewith the Lord doth exercise his own, they are to be contented under them, to wit, so as not to grudge and repine against God, *Job* 2. 9, 10. or to give way unto heartlesse dejection of spirit under adversity, *Prov.* 24. 10. though they may use lawful means for delivering themselves from it, *1 Sam.* 30. 9. and so, as not to be puffed up by prosperity, *Job* 31. 25. nor forget the Lord, *Prov.* 30. 9. and despise others who want, *Job* 31. 13. Thus *Paul* learned in every state therewith to be content; *he knew how to abound, &c.* 4. This great Lesson of Contentment under every estate, is a thing whereof all by nature are ignorant, none have skill in it except they learn it: *Paul* did learn it, *I have learned.* 5. The knowledge of this Lesson is attained, not so much by reading Books, and infixing in our memories directions to that purpose; as by frequent change of condition, and the Lords blessing of our changes for begetting in us experimental knowledge, how to carry our selves in each condition: thus *Paul* did learn this Lesson, *I have learned and am instructed;* The latter word signifieth, to be initiated in holy things, or religiously taught; so there is a piece of divine skill necessary for teaching folk this lesson. 6. The tentations which attend a prosperous condition are so many, such as pride, *1 Tim.* 6. 17. disdain of others, *Jan.* 2. 6. and security, *Luke* 12. 19. The duties which are required in it, are so many, such as thankfulness to God, *1 Chron.* 24. 10. beneficence to all men, *1 Tim.* 6. 18. humility and sobriety of spirit in the managing of it, *Jer.* 9. 23. and laying our account to meet with changes, *Job* 3. 25. and the many distractions which do accompany it, and tend to the hindering of those

those duties, are so subtil and insinuating, 1 Tim. 6. 9. that there is no lesse need of divine art for carrying of our selves aright under prosperity, than there is for such a christian carriage under adversity: so Paul must be instructed, how to be full, and how to abound, as well as how to be hungry, and how to suffer want. 7. Man's naturall faculties are renewed, but not destroyed by grace, or laid asleepe, as if Christ himself did all things, and we nothing: for Paul saith here, that he did; the action did flow from an inward principle of a renewed will and understanding, *I am able to do.* 8. The power by which renewed souls do work, is wholly Christs; not only the habits of grace are from him, but also the actuating of those habits doth flow from his special influence: *through him that strengtheneth me.* 9. There is a kind of omnipotency in a Believer, being supported by Christs strengthening power; so that there is nothing within the compasse of his christian calling, and for which there is a Covenant-promise for through-bearing, there is no such thing unpossible for him to do: *I am able to do all things.* 10. This note of universality, *All*, whether applied to persons, or things, is not to be taken every where in its larger sense, but to be astricted to the clear meaning of the place where it is, and the exigency of other Scriptures: so Paul saith, *I am able to do all things*, which cannot be extended to all and every thing without limitation (there being many things simply impossible to be done by any creature) but must be restricted to all those things which consist in the exercise of christian moderation under all dispensations, or at most, to all things within the compasse of his christian calling, and for which there is a covenant-promise for through-bearing: see 1 Cor. 6. 12. and chap. 9. 22. by which rule, that passage, 1 Tim. 2. 6. is to be expounded:

Verſ. 14. *Notwithſtanding, ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.*

Having guarded upon the one hand againſt their ſuſpecting of him to have been too much dejected through want, he guardeth againſt another miſtake, as if their gratuity had been little acceptable unto him; by ſhewing they had done well in doing what they had done, and ſharing with him in his ſufferings for Chriſt. *Doſt. 1.* There is nothing which men can do, wherein they are not liable to miſtakes: for, even while they are clearing themſelves of one miſtake, they are in hazard thereby to run under another, as Paul was here. 2. The danger of being miſtaken, ſhould hinder no man from going on in his duty; he is to do what he can to take off miſtakes, and in the mean time be going on in what is right: ſo Paul, having cleared himſelf, proceedeth in his duty, commending thoſe Philippians for their charity; and thereby wipeth off another miſtake, which might have riſen upon his guarding againſt the former; *Nevertheleſs, ye have done well.* 3. Though the Children of God be ſupported with courage from himſelf, to be content with, and to undergo their preſent lot; yet this muſt not make others neglect to help them in their ſtrait; becauſe in ſo doing they do but what is their duty: neither ſhould it make themſelves neglect the offer of ſupply from others, or vilipend it when it's received; this were to tempt God, by neglecting means of help, becauſe of Gods goodneſſe in ſupporting under want of means, when they could not be had. Thus, though Paul was enabled through Chriſt to be content with his hard lot; yet the Philippians give him help, and are therein approven and highly commended by him; *Nevertheleſs, ſaith he, ye have done well.* 4. It is the duty of all to prove comfortable unto thoſe who are ſuffering for truth, by ſupplying of their neceſſities according to their power: they did *well in communicating with Paul's affliction.* 5. They who make

make conscience of this duty, do hereby share in the afflictions of those who suffer for truth, as if they were suffering the same things, and for the same cause with them: so the Apostle affirms, because of their gratitude, they had communicated with his afflictions.

Verf. 15. Now ye Philippians know also that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no Church communicated with me, as concerning giving and receiving, but ye onely.

16. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

The Apostle sheweth himself mindfull, not onely of the present favour, but also of their by-past liberalitie towards him, ever since he began to preach the Gospel among them; and this not onely when he was labouring among themselves, but also when he was at Thessalonica; and withall doth guard against their suspecting of him, as too greedie in receiving so frequently from them, by shewing he had received nothing as a reward for his work from any other Church in those parts; for the truth whereof, he appealeth to their own knowledge. *Dock. 1.* There is a rule of equity to be kept betwixt Pastour and People, that, as he bestoweth upon them spirituall things by preaching of the Gospel, so they should furnish him with things carnall, by giving an honourable maintenance, 1 Cor. 9. 11. and this a faithfull Minister may expect and crave, not as a meer gratuity, but as due debt, 1 Tim. 5. 17. this is imported in the phrase here used by Paul, when speaking of maintenance which was bestowed on him by those he laboured amongst in the work of the Gospel, he useth the expression of *giving and receiving*, which is used by Merchants, who in their Books of Accompts, do mark what they give out, and what they receive in, as the due price of their ware. 2. Though maintenance be most due for Ministers; yet such is the perverseness and greed

of many, that hardly can they be driven to quit any thing for up-holding of the Gospell, though even an Apostle Paul were preaching among them: this Paul did find, *no Church did communicate with me, as concerning giving.* Though it may be also, the Apostle did forbear to receive any thing from others, were they never so willing, for the reasons mentioned, *1 Cor. 9. 15, 16, 18, 19. 2 Thess. 3. 8, 9.* 3. A faithfull servant of Jesus Christ, who is taken up with a desire after the gaining of souls, will digest many unkindnesses of that sort, passing them over as he best may, especially so long as the Lord provideth for him otherwayes, as he usually doth, making some to shew the more of kindnesse, that others shew but little: so doth Paul meekly passe over his not receiving from those other Churches, mentioning with thankfulness the help which he received from Philippi: *no Church communicated with me, but ye only.* 4. This speaketh much to the commendation of a People, when the generall neglect of duty by others, doth not onely not make them neglect their duty, but also exciteeth them to be more forward in it: for, from this are the Philippians commended; *no Church did communicate with me, but ye only; and ye sent once and again; they did not look so much unto that which others did, as what they themselves were bound to do.* 5. As the Lord may suffer his choicest servants to be driven to worldly straits through want of things necessary; so, usually he makes providence to tryft with their necessity, and answereth it by those who are least obliged, when others who are more bound, doth take no notice of it, or, they cannot conveniently make use of their help: so, even in *Theffalonica, ye sent once and again to my necessity; when the Theffalonians, to whom he was preaching, neglected him; or, he could not receive from them, the Philippians sent him supply.*

Verf. 17. *Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruits that may abound to your accompt.*

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He doth yet guard against their suspecting him of greed, shewing that his praising of their liberality, and charging of others with ingratitude, was not, that thereby he might incite them to give him more, but that they might be encouraged to grow more and more, as in all grace, so in this of liberality, whether towards him or others: the advantage thereof should accresse to themselves, more than to any other. *Doct. 1.* One action in it self good and lawfull, may be reckoned unto the worker, either as sin, or duty, according to the end which he proposeth to himself in it: so Paul's commending of their liberality, was in it self good, but if his end proposed, had been onely, or mainly, that thereby he might excite them to give him more, his action had been bale and sinfull; and therefore he purgeth himself of it, *not that I desire a gift*: but his intent being mainly to promote their salvation by stirring them up to their duty, his action is commendable; and therefore he owneth this as the thing intended by him, *but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.* 2. As Ministers ought in prudence to speak to the just commendation of any good, which they observe in people, v. 14. So, a pious heart will not be thereby puffed up, or rendered secure, as if he had done enough; but rather excited to make further progresse: *I desire fruit that may abound.* 3. The more a man doth abound in good works, and especially in the works of charity towards such as are in misery, the greater shall be his reward in Heaven, though not of merit, yet of grace, *Rom. 6. v. 23.* for, their fruit of charity should abound to their account. It is a Metaphore taken also from the Books of Merchants: our good deeds are marked as in a Compt-book by God, and he will give out accordingly.

Verf. 18. *But I have all, and abound, I am full, having received of Epaphroditus, the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God,*

That he may remove all suspicions of that kind, and praise their liberality yet further, he sheweth, that their gratuity carried by *Epaphroditus*, was received of him, and did abundantly satisfie, as being sufficient, yet, more than sufficient for the present strait: and that hereby they had done as acceptable service unto God, as those who under the Law did offer up a sacrifice perfumed with sweetest incense. *Doct. 1.* Though a man be never so trust-worthy in himself, and never so much trusted by those who do employ him; yet he ought in wisdom to guard against any sinister suspicion which may be taken up against his honestie and faithfulness: so *Epaphroditus*, though their Minister, and doubtlesse in great reputation among them, as a man who would have been loath to convert any of their publick charity to his own private use; yet returneth not untill *Paul* give it under his hand, that he had received the whole sum from him, *I have all, or, I have received all*, as it is in the Originall: he knew not but times and peoples esteem of him might change, and he might be brought to an accompt, or at least some might vent their own suspicions of him privately, to under-myne him.

2. Where there is frugality to manage, and the grace of contentation with what the Lord is pleased to bestow, a little portion of things worldly, will be thought sufficient: so, though a covetous man, and prodigall spend-thrift, doth never think he hath enough; yet *Paul* doth think it; *I abound, and am full, having received the things which ye sent.*

3. However there are no expiatory sacrifices for sin to be offered up by Christians, Christ having offered up himself once for all, *Heb. 9. 28.* and though the outward rite of sacrificizing in any kind be now abolished, all those rudiments ceasing with the non-age of the Church which was under the Old Testament, *Act. 15. 10.* yet the substance of the Eucharistick sacrifice used among the Jews, or the thing which was pointed out by that sacrifice, doth yet remain as a morall dutie, never to be laid aside, to wit, an evidencing of our thank-

thankfulness to God for favours received, which is done in part by giving a part of what he hath bestowed for the help of others who are in a strait; for Paul in this sense calleth their charity *an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice.* 4. Seeing our charity and beneficence unto those who are in straits, is a part of our christian sacrifice: Then, first, it must be willingly bestowed, and not through constraint, 2 Cor. 9. 7. Secondly, It must be offered unto God in obedience to a command, and to evidence our thankfulness unto him, and not to the creature, not to the Idol of our credit and estimation, or for other selfish ends, *Matth. 6. 2.* Thirdly, It must be offered on the right altar, to wit. Christ, (see *Heb. 13. 10*) that through his worth the offering may be accepted by God; for, all those were requisite unto orderly and acceptable sacrificing: see *Lev. 22. 19. Exod. 22. 20. and 20. 24. Deut. 5.* Though there be no such measure of obedience attainable here, with which the Lord will be so well pleased, as to judge the performer to be perfect, or adjudge him to eternal life for the worth that is in it, *Rom. 3. 20.* Christ's obedience and sacrifice only being acceptable, and thus well-pleasing unto him, *Rom. 5. 19.* yet he may be so pleased with his obedience, as to judge him sincere in what he doth, and to look on his performance, as his own gracious work in him; and that is, when the thing performed is in it self good, *Psal. 89. 30, 31, 32.* done by a man in Christ, *Job. 15. 4.* by strength drawn from Christ, *Job. 15. 5.* and for the right end, Gods glory, and not worldly applause, *Matth. 6. 5.* In this respect he calleth their beneficence, *An odour of a sweet smell, acceptable and well-pleasing unto God.*

Verf. 19. *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus.*

For their further encouragement, he promiseth unto them from Scripture-grounds (see *Psal. 41. 1.*) that God should recompence them for what they had given, and that

that abundantly, even in this life according to their necessity, not for any worth or dignity in their work, but of his own free-grace through Christ. *Dock. 1.* Scripture promises made of old, are still in force, and in all after-times applicable unto any indued with those qualifications which they had unto whom those promises were first made: so Paul applieth that promise (*Psal. 41.*) made unto those who were charitable in *David's* time, unto those *Philippians*; but my God shall supply all your need. *2.* That general promises may be the more safely and with the greater comfort applied to our own, or the particular case of others, we would search into such grounds as may be most promising for faith to rest upon in expectation of the thing promised: so the Apostle, to help their faith to close with this promise, layeth down two grounds: *1.* Gods sufficiency in these words, according to his riches; he hath whereupon to do it. *2.* His engagement upon his credit and honour in those words, my God, as if he had said, He is the God whose Ambassador I am, and so cannot in honour but recompence you for what ye have given to me in my strait. *Dock. 3.* Those who enjoy most of the world, cannot promise unto themselves, but they may be driven to straits: for, he supposeth even they might be reduced to straits, while he saith, my God shall supply all your need. *4.* The more beneficial any have been unto the poor servants of Christ in the time of their abundance, they may expect the more that God will be forth-coming unto them by his providence in the day of want: my God shall supply all your need. *5.* The Lord in dealing with his people, doth not look so much at their worth and deserving, as what is fitting for his own glory, and most befitting for such a glorious God to do: so he shall supply your need in glory, that is, liberality, as the magnificence of such a glorious King doth call for. *6.* Whatever recompence the Lord is pleased to give unto the good works, or alms-deeds of his Children, whether here or hereafter, it proceedeth not from the merit, or dignity of the work, but from the merits of Jesus Christ.

Christ, in whom they are as members in the head: Christ hath purchased all; and good works are only the rule according to which his purchase is distributed: *so he shall supply all your need by, or, in Jesus Christ.*

Verf. 20. *Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

The Apostle, in the third part of the chapter, concluding the Epistle. first, in contemplation of all the former mercies, ascribeth lasting praise and glory to God, as God, and as the Father of Believers, through vertue of that gracious Covenant made between him and them in Christ. *Doct. 1.* Though we can wish no real worth and excellency to be superadded unto that which God hath: for, he wanteth nothing, *Neb. 9. 5.* Yet it is the duty of Christians to be much in wishing, that those excellencies which are in God, may be more and more shining forth, *Isa. 64. 2.* and that the hearts of men and Angels may highly esteem of him because of them, *Psal. 107. 8.* for, this is the glory which the Apostle wisheth unto God, and by his practice teacheth others to do the like; *Now unto God be glory. 2.* That Christians may be much and real in this wish, they would seriously consider that worth, excellency, and goodnesse of God manifested to themselves in his works, particularly in his works of creation and general providence, in relation to which he is here called GOD; but most especially in the works of Redemption and Salvation purchased for, and actually bestowed upon lost sinners: in relation to which he is here called *Our Father*; that so our own hearts being once affected and filled, even to overflowing, we may with greater fervency and sincerity break out with this wish, That the same excellency, and more of it may be manifested unto, and constantly acknowledged both by our selves and others: So the Apostle, having considered his many favours spoken of through the whole Epistle, and looking on him as God and our Father, breaketh out in

in this wish, *Now unto God, and our Father be glory.*
 3. The fervent desire of real Saints to have the excellency, worth and goodnesse of God manifested, and accordingly acknowledged, are in a manner boundlesse, as being circumscribed by no time or place: there is no lesse than boundlesse everlasting glory comprehended in their wish; *glory for ever and ever*: wherby is usually expressed eternity and endlesse duration, see *Psalm. 10. 16. Rev. 22. 5.*

Ver. 21. Salute every Saint in Christ Jesus: the Brethren which are with me greet you.

22. All the Saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Cæsars household.

Secondly, In the conclusion, there are mutual salutations and commendations: some were to be saluted by them in his name, others who were with him did salute, or remember themselves unto them, of whom he reckoneth three ranks. First, Those who were in Church-office, called *Brethren*, ver. 21. Secondly, The private Christians, or Church-members, which were at Rome. And thirdly, More especially he designeth Cæsars household, to wit, some of his Servants and Courtiers, who were Converts. *Dott. 1.* External duties of civility tending of their own nature to entertain and increase love among men, are not to be neglected by Christians; of which sort are civil salutations: Though civility and good manners be not Religion; yet Religion destroyeth them not, but injoyneth them: So *Paul*, and those primitive Christians, did mutually salute each other; *Salute every Saint.* 2. Whatever a man be in his inward condition before God, or in his outward condition worldly, whether rich or poor, noble or ignoble; yet, so long as he standeth a Church-member, a Minister should put that respect upon him, and do those duties to him which are due unto one in such a relation; for, he injoyneth them, in his name, *to salute every Saint*, that is, all the Church-members, who are Saints all of them by external,

nal, or federal sanctity, or holiness: according to which, in regard of the Covenant made betwixt God and the visible Church, every one professing subjection unto that Covenant are separated from other people, and in a particular manner dedicated unto Gods service, *Exod. 31. 13.* Now that *Saints* are taken in this latitude here, is very probable: for, if the command had been to salute only those, who are Saints by inherent holiness, how could it have been obeyed? for, real saving grace cannot be known infallibly by another, and so inevitably they should have saluted many Hypocrites in place of Saints, passing by others who were Saints indeed. It may indeed bear thus much, That if any had more real evidence of grace than others, the Apostle would have himself more specially remembered unto such; but this is not all, for he will have them saluting every Saint, and so those who were well known unto them to be such: Neither doth the words following, *in Christ Jesus*, militate against this sense; for, even those, who are externally and federally Saints, are in Christ by an external and visible union, consisting in the serious profession of those Truths which relate to him; the effect of which union, is, the communication of common gifts of the Spirit to every one according to their measure: see *Joh. 15. 2.* *Every branch in me which beareth no fruit*, which supposeth some to be in Christ in the way mentioned, who yet are fruitless branches, and so unregenerate. 3. Christian charity will so far cover the infirmities and failings of others; as not to disown them as Brethren, nor yet neglect those christian duties which we owe unto them, or are obliged to do for them as Brethren; for, although (*ch. 2. v. 20, 21*) he complains of all who were with him, except *Timotheus* only, that *no man was like-minded*, and all did seek their own things; yet nevertheless, he doth in their name salute the Philippians, calling them *Brethren*; *the Brethren which are with me greet you.* 4. So powerful is the Gospel being accompanied with Gods blessing, *Rom. 1. 16.* that it will set upon and enter the Houses of greatest Persecutors,

secutors, and carry some of their chiefeſt Minions captive from their very elbow: ſome even of bloody *Nero's* houſe are converted by the Goſpel: *ſhoſe of Ceſars houſe*. 3. Such is the courage and valour of ſpirit with which the Lord doth endue ſincere profeſſors of the Goſpel, that they will dare to hold up a Banner for Truth, even under the noſe, and within the gates of moſt blood-thirſty raging Perſecutors; for, ſome of *Nero's* Houſe upon all hazard perform thoſe duties which their chriſtian calling tied them unto: *chiefly they that are of Ceſar's houſhold* do greet you.

Verſ. 23. The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be wiſh you all. Amen.

Thirdly, He concludeth with his uſual farewel-wiſh, to which he affixeth his *Amen*. *Doct. 1.* Gods grace is the ſum of all which a man needeth to wiſh either for himſelf or others; for his *grace* is, firſt, Gods favour, as the fountain of all which is good, *Eph. 2. 8, 9.* And, ſecondly, the ſtreams of grace inherent, and increaſe in it, flowing from that fountain, *2 Pet. 3. 18.* And what want is there where thoſe are? So *Paul* ſummeth up all his deſires in this one, *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be wiſh you.* 2: Gods grace and favour, which reconciled ſouls do enjoy, together with the whole bulk of graces inherent, which flow from it, are all purchaſed unto us by Chriſts merit, and applied by his interceſſion; and therefore is juſtly called *the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* 3. Our prayers and wiſhes unto God ſhould proceed from ſuch deliberation of mind, *Matth. 20. 22.* ſuch earneſtneſſe of heart and affection, *Jam. 5. 16.* and ſuch confidence of an answer according to the tenour of the promiſe, *Jam. 1. 6.* that we may underſtandingly and ſincerely affix our *Amen* unto them; So doth the Apoſtle, *Grace be wiſh you all. Amen.*

A BRIEF EXPOSITION

Of the Epistle of PAUL the Apostle to the
COLOSSIANS.

THE ARGUMENT.

Ephras, having founded a Church at Colosse, (chap. 1. v. 7.) a city of Phrygia in the lesser Asia, near to Laodicea and Hierapolis, chap. 4. v. 13. and perceiving the truth of the Gospel preached by him, to be impugned; partly, by some converted from Judaism, who urged the Ceremonies of the Law, as necessary to salvation, chap. 2. v. 8— partly, by some converted from Gentilisme, who, from principles of abused Philosophie, did urge the worshipping of Angels, and other superstitious rites, grounded only upon humane tradition, chap. 2. v. 8. 18. He informeth Paul, now prisoner at Rome (chap. 4. v. 3.) of the case of this Church: whereupon Paul writeth this Epistle unto them. His scope wherein is, (often prefacing, to v. 12. chap. 1.) to confirm that doctrine which was preached unto them by Ephras, to the end of ch. 1. and to guard them against all the fore-named errors, contrary to that doctrine, chap. 2. and to incite them to the study and practice of holiness, both in the generall and speciall duties of Christianity, chap. 3. and to v. 7. of chap. 4. After which he insisteth upon some particular affairs, such as recommendations, salutations, and some directions, to the end of chap. 4.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

IN the first part of this Chapter (after the inscription, v. 2.) he insinuateth himself upon their affections, and maketh way for his main purpose: First, by shewing he did give thanks to God for them, v. 3. being moved thereto by the report of their spirituall graces, v. 4, 5. Secondly, by commending them for their fruitfulness, v. 6. and their Passour *Exprobras* unto them, v. 7, 8. Thirdly, by shewing he prayed also to God for them: 1. for increase of knowledge, v. 9. 2. for growth in holiness, v. 10. and 3. for courage under sufferings, v. 11.

In the second part, he giveth a brief sum of saving doctrine; wherein he declareth, how God doth fit the Elect for Heaven, v. 12. by calling them effectually, v. 13. and pardoning their sin, v. 14. Next, he describeth Jesus Christ the Redeemer of the Elect, from his internal relation to God, as being his Image, v. 15. — his external relation unto all things created, as being before them, v. — 15. their Creator, last end v. 16. and their upholder, v. 17. and from his relation to the Church, as being her Head, &c. v. 18. and from his furniture to the Office of Mediatour, v. 19. especially to reconcile man with God, v. 20. which generall doctrine of reconciliation, he applyeth unto the Colossians, v. 21, 22.

In the third part, he exhorteth them to continue in this doctrine, confirming the same; First, from the authority of his Office, v. 23. which, together with the doctrine preached by him, was confirmed by his sufferings, v. 24. and from his call to the Office, v. 25. Secondly, from the worth of the doctrine in it self, v. 26, 27. and thirdly, because it was the same doctrine which he himself preached, v. 28. with great pains, and much divine assistance, v. 29.

Verſ. 1. *Paul an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother,*

2. *To the ſaints and faithfull bretheren in Chriſt, which are at Coloffe, grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

IN theſe two verſes, is, the inſcription of the Epiſtle, containing, firſt, a deſcription of thoſe who ſent it, from their names and adjuncts, v. 1. Secondly, of thoſe to whom it was directed; from the place of their habitation, and three excellent Epithets. Thirdly, the Apoſtle's uſuall ſalutation, v. 2.

From the perſons who ſent the Epiſtle; *Learn* 1. How free and powerfull muſt divine grace be, which of a perſecuting *Saul* (*Acts* 8.v.3.) did make an *Apoſtle Paul*. 2. In the firſt beginning of the Chriſtian Church, there were a certain kinde of Office-bearers, named *Apoſtles*, who were called immediatly by God, *Job*. 20. 21. had infallible knowledge of the doctrine of the Goſpel, by immediate inſpiration from the Spirit of God, *Job*. 16. 13. were not tyed unto any certain charge, further than rules of prudence did direct, *Matth*. 28. 19. were giſted with power to work miracles for confirmation of their doctrine, *Mark* 3. 15. the glad tidings of grace being then but new, *Job*. 1. 17. And did occaſionally exerce the duties of all the Office-bearers of the Church, *Acts* 4. 35. Of which Apoſtles, *Paul* was one: *Paul an Apoſtle*. 3. Jeſus Chriſt the Mediatour, is intruſted with the work of ſending out Miniſters to his Church; for, he is the Churches Head, *Eph*. 5. 23. unto whom it belongeth to provide all things neceſſary for the body: hence *Paul* is the *Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt*, as being ſent by him. 4. The Father's will and Chriſt's, do fully agree in that which tendeth to the Churches good, as here, in ſending forth an Apoſtle, *Paul* is an *Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, by the will of God*. 5. None ought to intrude himſelf upon any Office, much leſſe upon an Office in the Church, without an

an orderly call : *Paul is an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.* 6. It concerneth a Minister to be so clear in the matter of his Call, that he may be able to avow it unto others, especially when his Calling is questioned, *Am. 7. 14. &c.* when he hath to do with those that know him not, as here, chap. 2. v. 1 : and when he meeteth with contempt and other discouragements in the discharge of his Calling, *Jer. 17. 15, 16.* So *Paul* upon some, or all of these occasions, avoweth his Calling : *An Apostle of Jesus Christ.* 7. The most gracious, able, and eminent Christians, should be, and ordinarily are so disposed, as not to despise the lesse eminent and weaker ; but giving them all due respect, are to take their assistance in any thing wherein they may be useful ; especially, seeing God hath not given all things unto every one, and the meanest have somewhat whereby they may prove steadable to the best, *1 Cor. 12. 21, 22.* So *Paul* joyneth *Timothy* with himself in the Inscription, though *Timothy* was not an Apostle, or Penman of Scripture ; because he being well known unto those *Colossians*, his assent might adde the more weight unto that which is written, and that hereby *Timothens* might be yet more commended unto them, as being so highly honoured by such an eminent Apostle : for which cause also *Paul* giveth him the name of *Brother*, they being fellow-labourers in the Gospel ; *Timothens our Brother.*

From the description of those unto whom the Epistle is directed, *Learn, 1.* Though all the members of the visible Church be externally Saints, and federally holy, *1 Cor. 7. 14.* yet there are some, who, besides that relative holinesse, are really Saints, inherently holy, and indued with gracious vertues and qualifications, and such God respecteth most ; for whose sake mainly he sendeth his word unto others, *2 King. 3. 14.* for, *Paul* writeth to the Saints in this latter sense mainly, though not excluding the former. 2. Whoever are Saints, are also faithfull, and Believers ; whoever are Believers, are also Saints ; and so far and in the same sense that a man is a Saint,

Saint, he is a Believer also: they who are externally Saints, and federally holy, do profess at least the doctrine of Faith, either personally, or parentally; and they who are inherently holy, are also inherently and savingly Believers, as not only professing the doctrine, but also assenting to the truth of it, and imbracing it in their hearts; and again, all such Believers are really changed from sin to holiness: So these two are here conjoyned, as being of equal extent; *To the Saints, and faithful.* 3. All Saints and Believers, are also Brethren, because of their professing the same Religion, and worshipping the same God, *Deut.* 17. 20. because of their brotherly love and affection, *2 Thess.* 4. 9. because they have one Father, God, and one elder Brother, Jesus Christ, *Joh.* 1. 12. and because they are all ingrafted in one mystical body, and quickened by one and the same Spirit, *Eph.* 4. 4. as natural Brethren have their birth from the self-same parents; so the *Saints and faithful* are also Brethren. 4. There is no sanctity, faith, or fraternity of any moment unto salvation, except it be founded upon Christ, flowing from him, and relating to him: whatever is of those among Heathens, and men otherwise destitute of Christ, is only counterfeit, not real; civilizing, not saving, *Mat.* 5. 46. so they are *Saints, Faithful, Brethren in Christ.* 5. After Christ's incarnation and death, free-grace hath enlarged it self much beyond its ancient bounds: for, whereas before, the bounds of the people were according to the number of the children of Israel, *Deut.* 32. 8. there is now a Church of *Saints and faithful brethren at Colosse.*

From the salutation, *Learn,* 1. Gods favour and free-grace is to be sought after in the first place, whether for our selves or others, and all other things which tend to our happiness here, or hereafter, as streams flowing from that fountain; thus Paul wisheth for *grace* first, and *peace* next. 2. Where Gods grace and favour is obtained, all other things prosperous will undoubtedly follow, in so far as God seeth them to conduce for our good, *Matth.* 7.

11. as appeared from the connection between the good things wished for by the Apostle: *Grace be unto you, and peace.* 3. Gods grace and favour, together with all good things flowing from it, is the peculiar allowance of those who lay claim to God as theirs, according to the tenor of the Covenant of grace: for, Paul, in seeking grace and peace, owneth God as Father; *from Gods our Father.* 4. As God hath fulnesse of grace, and of all things necessary, to be conveyed unto lost sinners; so there is no need unto him, to receive of that fulnesse from him, but through Jesus Christ, who is Mediator between God and man, *1 Tim. 2. 5.* for, he wisheth grace from God the Father, *through Jesus Christ.*

- **Verf. 3.** *We give thanks to God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying alwaies for you.*

That the Apostle may excite those Colossians to constancy and progresse in faith and piety, and in order thereto, procure their attention and benevolence, he sheweth that he and *Timothy*, did make conscience of giving thanks to God on their behalf; and this they did alwaies when they prayed for them. *Doct. 1.* So apt are people to reject Truth, when there is any prejudice against the Preacher (*1 King. 12. 8.*) that whosoever would preach to any good purpose must labour so to bear in upon peoples affections, that they may have ground to conceive of him, as of one that loveth them; this the Apostle doth here through the whole Preface unto the 12. verse. 2. As it is our duty in relation to God, *Matth. 9. 8.* so it speaketh much our hearty affection unto others, when the graces of God, parts, and abilities that are in them, do not produce carnal emulation or envy, *Numb. 11. 29.* nor flattering commendations of the men themselves, *Job, 32. 21.* but furnisheth us with matter of thanksgiving unto God: Thus *Paul* doth evidence his affection to those Colossians; *We give thanks to God.* 3. God is the Father of Jesus Christ, not only

only as God, by an eternall generation and communication of his whole essence unto him in a way unspeakable *Ps. 2. 7.* but even also as man through vertue of the personal union of the two natures in Christ, and in a special way, which doth far excell all other wayes, whereby he is a father to other men and angels, *Luke 1. 32.* thus God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, are one: for the particle *and*, is exegerick of the same thing, and not copulative of things different. 4. In all our performances we should eye God, with a respect had to Jesus Christ; seeing the Father is well pleased only in him, both with our persons and duties, *Matth. 3. 17.* for, in giving thanks, he eyeth God, with a relation to Christ: *We give thanks to God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* 5. Then is the fittest time to give thanks to God for favours bestowed, when our hearts are somewhat elevated to God, and our affections somewhat warmed in the duty of prayer; and the duties of prayer and praise do mutually contribute for the help one of another: thus the Apostle gave thanks, *alwayes praying for them*, that is, alwayes when he prayed for them: for so are the words to be ordered, and not *praying alwayes*, as if he had been constantly praying for them.

Ver. 4. Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints.

He declareth the reasons of his thanksgiving, to wit, those spirituall graces which were eminent in them: of which he instanceth two, and doth illustrate them from their principall object, *faith in Christ* and *love to all the saints.* *Doct. 1.* Where there is saving grace in any, there is sufficient ground of rejoycing in God for them, whatever be their case otherwayes: and where this is not, there is little besides but matter of grief; all other things without this, being but a curse and snare unto them, *Pie. 1. 15.* So Paul giveth thanks, *having heard of their faith and love.* 2. Of those spirituall favours, the injoyment

whereof, is a ground of thanksgiving; faith is among the first: for, thereby we are united unto, and have communion with Christ, *Eph. 3. 17.* hereby we are justified, *Rom. 5. 1.* and our hearts purified, *Acts 15. 9.* and all our performances accepted, *Heb. 11. 4.* So he thanketh God for their *faith*, in the first place. 3. Though there be no Scripture-truth, unto which, being once made known, the grace of faith giveth not a firm assent, *Acts 24. 14.* yet Jesus Christ, and those truths which speak of him, are the principall object of saving and justifying faith; and therefore it is called, *faith in Jesus Christ.* 4. There is a necessary connexion betwixt the graces of faith and love, the former without the latter being dead, *1 Jam. 2. 17.* and the latter without the former, being not reall, but in appearance onely, or at the best but a morall vertue, and no saving-grace, *Matth. 5. 20.* so they are here conjoynd, *of your faith in Jesus Christ, and your love.* 5. Though Christians are bound to love all men, even their enemies, *Matth. 5. 44.* yet seeing God is to be loved chiefly, and all others but in subordination to him, *Matth. 22. 38. 39.* it followeth, that those are to have most of our love, who resemble God most; therefore the love of those Colossians was chiefly towards the *saints.* 6. We are to lay out our love upon Saints, as they are Saints, for the reality or appearance of good in them, and not for other by-respects only, or mainly, as of kindred, friendship, or favours bestowed by them, *Matth. 5. 46.* neither are we to with-draw our affection from any such, because of their infirmities, their differing from us in opinion, or personall injuries received from them, *1 Cor. 12. 15.* for so their love was to all the *saints*, none being excepted.

Verf. 5. For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the Gospel.

He sheweth the cause moving them to persevere in those

those graces, to wit, the hoped-for reward of glory preserved for them in Heaven, and made known unto them; yea, and the hope whereof was wrought in them. *Rom. 10. 17.* by the word of truth, that is, the Gospel. *Dott. 1.* The believers portion is not given him in hand, he hath it onely in hope: for, it is called, *their hope*, a thing onely hoped for. 2. The believers portion is laid up for him, and safely kept for his use, and that in a most sure place, to wit, in *Heaven*, where neither moth, nor rust doth corrupt, nor thieves do break through and steal; which is *laid up*, to wit, safely, as a parent would hide a treasure for the use of his childe; so doth the word signifie, *which is laid up for you in Heaven.* 3. As there is little to be expected and hoped for on earth by a man who will live godlily, except temptations and crosses, *2 Tim. 3. 12.* so the eying of this rich reward of glory laid up in Heaven, is a strong incouragement to persevere in faith, love, and other graces: and it is lawful for Christians to have an eye to this reward, as a motive to duty: providing, 1. it be not looked at as a thing to be merited by their obedience, *Rom. 6. 23.* Nor 2. As the onely or chief motive, *2 Cor. 5. 14.* thus they were incouraged, not from any thing earthly, but from the hope which was laid up for them in Heaven. *Dott. 4.* That ever Heaven and glory should be enjoyed by any of lost mankinde, was a thing that Nature's light could never have dreamed of, except God himself had made it known by his Word: thus he mentioneth the hearing of this rich reward by the Word preached, as the mean whereby it was made known unto them, *whereof ye heard in the Word.* 5. It is the word preached which the Lord doth ordinarily blesse, as his instrument for begetting saving faith, and the hope of glory in us; the word not onely propounding and making known to the understanding, the object of those graces, which was before hid; but the Lord also, at, or after the hearing of this Word, insuseth them into the heart, *Act. 16. 14.* Thus he mentioneth the hearing of it, as the mean also, whereby the saving hope

hope of this reward was wrought in them: *whereof ye heard before in the word.* 6. Though the whole Word of God be true, *Ps.* 19. 9. as being the word of him who cannot lie, *Tit.* 1. 2. yet the Word of the Gospel is eminently the Word of Truth, as having Christ for its main subject, who is the way, the truth, and life, *Joh.* 14. 6. and being confirmed by the Testaments blood, *Joh.* 18. -- 37. for, saith he, *in the word of truth*, that is, *of the Gospel.* 7. It is this Word of the Gospel, the preaching whereof doth make known unto us, and worketh in us that blessed hope: the Word of the Law; as distinct from the Gospel, doth onely damne, *2 Cor.* 3. 6, 7. but the Word of Grace, revealed in the Gospel, bringeth salvation, *Tit.* 2. 11. So the Apostle speaking of that glorious reward, he addeth, *whereof ye have heard in the word of truth*, that is, *of the Gospel.*

Verf. 6. Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world, and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and know the grace of God in truth.

Having mentioned the Gospel, he commendeth it and the Colossians joyntly with it: 1. The Gospel preached to them by Epaphras, was the same which was preached by the Apostles through the world. 2. It had brought forth fruits of an holy life in those who heard it, especially among them. 3. Those fruits were timeous and constant. Every one of which particulars, may be looked upon as an additionall cause of his thanksgiving to God for them. *Dob.* 1. God bringeth the Gospel unto a people before they send for it: he is found of them who sought him not, *Isa.* 65. 1. *which is come unto you*, saith he: 2. This is matter of praise to God, when the light of the Gospel breaketh up, where before it was not, and is accompanied with early and constant fruits of humility, faith, love, and other graces, among those to whom it is preached: for, those are reasons why he thanked God for them: *which is come unto you, and bringeth forth fruit,*

fruits, &c. 3. Christ can most swiftly drive the chariot of his Gospel when he pleaseth, as appears from this, that within a few years after his death, it was in all the world, that is, in all the Airts and principall parts of it, and in opposition to that astricted dispensation under the Old Testament. 4. This may serve abundantly to commend a doctrine preached, so that hearers may safely venture on it, as the truth of God, that First, It is the same which the Apostles did preach through the world, which may be known by their writings, 1 Joh. 1. 7. although it differ much from that which is taught in the Romish Church, or any other particular Church on earth. Secondly, That it bringeth forth fruits of an holy life, as the Gospel hath alwayes borne of those fruits, among some of them who heard it; and no other doctrine, whether humane Philosophie, morall precepts, or the Law it self, as distinct from the Gospel, can thoroughly and inwardly sanctifie those who have the knowledge of it, Heb. 10. 1. Thirdly, That the fruits brought forth by it, are early and constant, not as the morning dew, which passeth away: for, the Apostle, from these three, commendeth that doctrine which Epaphras had taught them; as it is in all the world, and bringeth forth fruits since the day, &c. Doct. 5. That the doctrine preached may be fruitfull among a people, it is required, First, That not onely they hear it but also believe it: for, by *knowing*, is meant believing; see upon Phile. 1. 8. since the day ye heard and knew. Secondly, That use be made of, and hold laid chiefly upon the free grace of God through Christ; this is pointed at, while he giveth unto the Gospel the name of *grace*, in relation to bringing forth of fruits: and *knew the grace of God*. Thirdly, That as the Gospel would be sincerely taught by Preachers, without any mixture of error; so it would be heard, believed, and the grace which is offered by it, employed by people sincerely, not hypocritically, by pretending only to do, when really they do not: for, the word *truth* may relate both to Epaphras his sincerity in preaching,

ing, and to their reality in practising what was professed by them; and knew the grace of God in truth, saith he:

Verf. 7. *As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful Minister of Christ:*

8. *Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.*

Having commended the doctrine, he commendeth the Preacher, *Epaphras*, in opposition to the false Teachers, who, it is like, did labour to weaken his authority, because he was not an Apostle. He is commended, First, From his relation to *Paul*, as being dear unto him, and a fellow-servant with him: Secondly, From his office, as being a Minister, enlarged from his fidelity in it, and relation to them, ver. 7. Thirdly, From his respect unto them, evidenced by the good report which he had brought to *Paul* of them. Doct. 1. Whoever loveth the successe of the Gospel, would by all means labour to beget and entertain a good understanding betwixt a faithful Minister and his flock: for, to this end, doth *Paul* commend *Epaphras*, as his dear fellow-servant, &c. 2. Ministers especially, should be so far from bearing down the deserved estimation of others, & envying of their zeal in the Lords work, lest it may detract somewhat from them. (*Phil. 1. 15.*) that the more zealous a man be for God, the more diligent and faithful in the work of gaining souls, he ought, and will (if they themselves be honest) have a greater share of their affections: so, because *Epaphras* was faithful, he is dear unto *Paul*; our dear fellow-servant, who is a faithful Minister. 3. Whatever odds there be among Ministers in their gifts and parts, they ought all to draw together in one yoke for advancing of the Lords work; seeing there is work for all, *Matth. 9. 37.* and the meanest may be helpfull, *1 Cor. 12. 21.* So *Paul* looketh on *Epaphras* as his fellow-servant, though he was much above him for estimation and parts. 4. As the dignity of the Ministerial-Calling is such, that it challengeth reverence and respect from all, unto those who

who are intrusted with it, 1 Tim. 5. 17. So a Minister who would be respected either by God or man, ought to be *faithful*, eying his Masters glory in the first place, and not his own, 1 Pet. 4. 11. and promoting to his uttermost the spiritual good of those who are committed unto his charge; by omitting nothing which may conduce for that end; doing nothing which may hinder it; preferring their profiting to his own profit, pleasure, and ease, 1 Cor. 10. 33. yea, and upon all hazard preferring their profit to their sinful humours, Gal. 1. 10. and where this is, it commendeth a Minister much; so Epaphras is commended in that he was a *faithful Minister*. 5. As people would respect all the Servants of Jesus Christ, Phil. 2. 29. so chiefly those who are their own Ministers, and actually trusted with the charge of their souls: for, he will have them respecting Epaphras, because he was their own Minister: *who is for you a faithful Minister*. 6. To speak unto the deserved commendation of those that are absent, without detracting any thing from their just worth, is praise-worthy, and evidenceth a man's faithfulness much towards those of whom he so speaketh: as the contrary doth argue a man to be unfaithfull, Jer. 9. 4. for, this was an evidence of his being faithfull for them; *he also declared unto us your love*; saith he. 7. Then is love praise-worthy, when it is in the spirit or spiritual, that is, wrought by the Spirit of God, Gal. 5. 22. when it is in a spiritual, or renewed heart, 1 Pet. 1. 22, 23. and drawn out by spiritual considerations and motives, chiefly such as the work of grace already in the person loved, Gal. 6. 10. or some hope at least that this work may yet be, where it is not, 1 Cor. 13. 7. and not by carnal, natural, or civil motives only, Matth. 5. 46. for which reasons their love, is said to be *in the Spirit*.

Verf. 9. *For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.*

Having

Having shewen how he had thanked God for them, he mentioneth now his praying for them; and this as a further mean to procure their good-will. In this verse is, first, the cause moving him to pray, to wit, that he heard by *Epaphras* of their love. Secondly, the manner of his prayer, it was timely, constant, and fervent. Thirdly, the first of those things which he prayed for, to wit, increase and fullness of the knowledge of Gods revealed will: which knowledge he divideth in two. First, *wisdom*, whereby we know celestially mysteries revealed in Scripture. Secondly, *understanding*, whereby, as it is distinguished from *wisdom*, we know our duty, and the right way of reducing all our knowledge to practice. *Psalm*. 1. As the graces of God's Spirit in any, are matter of thanksgiving to God; so they are incitements also unto prayer for those who have them; for the graces of the best are but imperfect, *1 Cor.* 13. 9, subject to decay, *Rev.* 2. 4. and may be abused, *2 Cor.* 12. 7. Hence *Paul* takes occasion from their graces, for which he had blessed God, *verse* 4. &c. to pray to God for them: for *this cause we pray*. 2. As our praying to God for others, doth evidence much our affection to them; so, the expressions of our sympathie that way, would be timely begun, and constantly continued in: Thus *Paul*, to testify his affection towards this Church, sheweth, he prayed for them, and that timely: *Since the day we heard it*, and constantly, *we cease not*: which is not to be understood, as if he had done no other thing but that, he had a rooted desire after their good, which was alwayes expressed by him in prayer, when opportunity did offer. 3. The knowledge of God's will revealed in Scripture, is to be studied above the knowledge of any other thing besides, as being more sublime, *1 Cor.* 2. 6, 7, and so more pleasant, yea and more profitable, *verse* 27. nor any other for, whileas he prayeth that they may be filled *with the knowledge of Gods will*, he speaketh of his revealed will, *Deut.* 29. 29. 4. They who know most of God's will revealed in Scripture, come far short of what they should

should know; there is a fullness of knowledge which is attained by none. 1 Cor. 13. 12. but should be aimed at by all: for, notwithstanding the Apostle had heard of their knowing the grace of God, verse 6. yet he prayeth here, that they may be filled with the knowledge of his will. 5. Our desires after spirituall good, would be enlarged, and in a manner insatiable: great things would be sought from God; for, he is a great King. Ps. 95. 2. whom it becometh to give largely: so he seeketh, that they may be filled. 6. As wisdom, or knowledge of divine mysteries, and of the things of faith, is requisite: so also is understanding, or knowledge of our duty, and of the right way to go about it; with due respect had to time (Pj. 1. 3) place (Act. 5. 1) company (Ps. 39. 1) and other circumstances, Luke 8. 18. upon the right ordering whereof, the goodnesse of an action dependeth much, Ps. 50. 23. In all wisdom and understanding. 7. The knowledge, wisdom and understanding, mainly to be sought after, is spirituall, that is, of things spirituall, 1 Cor. 2. 2. attained unto by spirituall means, as prayer, hearing, reading, and meditation, Psal. 119. 18. Prov. 1. 8. and produced in us by the Spirit of God upon the use of those means, 1 Cor. 2. 10. for, he saith, in all spiritual wisdom. Or. 8. There is no part of this spirituall knowledge and wisdom, the attaining whereof is not to be endeavored by us: some truths are indeed more necessary to be known than others, Heb. 6. 1. yet we are not to slight the knowledge of any revealed truth, Acts 20. 27. In all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Verf. 10. That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.

He prayeth, secondly, for increase of holinesse to them, or, for such a conversation, as is worthy of the Lord: which he brancheth forth in three: First, their aiming in all things to please him, as the scope of all their actions. Secondly,

condly, fruitfulness in good works. And thirdly, growth in the saving knowledge of God: *Doct. 1.* Spirituall knowledge, wisdom, and understanding is to be sought after, not to be puffed up with (*Coloss. 2. 18.*) or, to rest upon it, *Luke 12. 47.* but that we may order our practice according to it: for, the end why the Apostle did pray for knowledge to these Colossians, is, *that ye may walk worthy of the Lord.* 2. It is not every sort of walking which is required as the fruit of knowledge; but a *walking worthy of the Lord*, which doth not import a dignity or worth in our walking, to recompence the Lord, but onely a becomingnesse, and not repugnancie to that state whereunto we are called by him (as the same word is well rendered, *Phil. 1. 27.*) which may consist with many failings and sins of infirmity, where there is self-judging for them, *Rom. 7. 14.* 3. That we may thus walk worthy of the Lord, it is required, first, that there be an habituall purpose at least in every action, and an actuall purpose in actions more solemne and weighty, to please him by our obedience to him: for, so the Apostle explaineth *walking worthy*, to wit, *unto all well-pleasing.* Secondly, there must be fruitfulness following upon his pains towards us; and this must be in works which are good, as being commanded or warranted by God for the matter, *Isa. 29. 13.* and gone about in the right manner, chap. 3. v. 17. and no good work is to be omitted, unto which we have a calling from God, *Luke 12. 14.* *Being fruitful in every good work.* Thirdly, as fruitfulness in good works maketh much for the increase of knowledge: so, if we would walk worthy of the Lord, we must be growing in knowledge: Ignorance in professors, dishonours God as much as fruitlesnesse: for, *increasing in the knowledge of God*, is joyned with *fruitfulness*, and both of them required, in order to their *walking worthy of the Lord.*

Ver. 11. *Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.*

In order to their walking worthy of the Lord, unto all well-pleasing, he prayed thirdly, that they being furnished from above with power, might patiently endure whatsoever afflictions they should meet with in the way of their duty, and that with joyfulness. *Dost. 1.* God is well-pleased with, and much honoured by those who are christianly, and upon right grounds, patient under the crosse, and cheerfull: for, in order to their walking worthy of the Lord, unto all well-pleasing, spoken of v. 10. he prayeth that they may be *strengthened unto all patience and long-suffering*, in this veric. 2. So many are our spirituall adversaries, *Eph. 6. 12.* so many are their onsets from all hands, *2 Cor. 2. 11.* and so necessary is it to overcome not onely one, but all, *Heb. 12. 4.* that no lesse is required than might, and all might, for carrying the victory in this Christian warfare: for, the Apostle prayeth for it: *being strengthened with all might.* 3. This might, and all might, wherewith Christians are furnished, is not their own, they are but weak and infirm in themselves, even though renewed and sanctified, *Rom. 7. — 18.* their strength must be sought by prayer from God; and, it floweth from no other fountain than the power of God: for, Paul seeketh it by prayer, and pointeth at the power of God, as the great Magazine from whence it cometh: *according to his glorious power.* 4. The power of God, whereby believers are strengthened, is alwayes glorious, as being still victorious over strongest adversaries, *Rom. 8. 37.* and making weak believers to overcome principalities and powers, *2 Cor. 12. 9.* *According to his glorious power.* 5. Christian strength and fortitude, is best seen under saddest sufferings: and when crosses and hardships are entertained with patience, and continued crosses with long-sufferings, or with patience drawn

drawn out in length, it speaketh much of christian strength and courage: for, the effect of their being strengthened with all might, is, *all patience and long-suffering*. 6. There is an allnesse, or universality, which ought to be in this grace of patience. First, with respect to the subject; it ought to quiet the whole man, his hand, his tongue, his heart, *Psal. 37. 1.* Secondly, to the grace it self, as being without any mixture of passion, so far as is possible, *Jam. 1. 4.* Thirdly, with respect to crosses of all kinds, *Heb. 12. 4.* And fourthly, It ought to be extended to all times, so long as the crosse continues, *Heb. 11. 27. Unto all patience.* Doct. 7. Our patience must not be unwilling, and, as it were, extorted by force, but ought to proceed from a joyful mind, as knowing all things work together for our good; and that one day we shall be above the reach of sufferings, *Matth. 5. 12. Long-suffering with joyfulness.*

Vers. 12. Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light.

The Apostle, in the second part of the chapter, being to propound a short sum of christian doctrine, doth by way of thanksgiving, make mention of God the Father his gracious work, whereby he maketh the Elect fit to partake of Heaven, the bright and glorious Inheritance of the Saints. Doct. 1. Christian joy, if of the right stamp, doth vent it self, not in lascivious expressions, or gestures, *Eph. 5. 4.* but in thanksgiving to God: for, having spoken of their long suffering with joyfulness, he sheweth from his own example, how their joy should be expressed, to wit, by giving thanks to the Father. 2. The serious consideration of the admirable work of our Redemption, may make a man rejoyce under the saddest of crosses: for, he pointeth at the reason of their joyfulness, to wit, the work of our Redemption, whereof he here speaketh. 3. So admirable is the work of our Redemption,

tion, and so much of mercy, *Rom. 5. 8.* justice, *Isa. 53. 9, 10.* and divine condescendence is manifested in it, *Job 3. 16.* that Paul can hardly speak of this subject without giving of thanks to God, and exciting of others to do the like: *Giving thanks to the Father.* 4. Heaven is a lighesom and splendid Inheritance, full of the light of knowledge, *1 Cor. 13. 12.* joy, *Psal. 16. 11.* and glory, *Mat. 12. 3.* for, it's Heaven whereof he speaketh, while he saith, *the inheritance in light.* 5. Heaven is the portion of those only, who are Saints: no unclean thing shall enter there: for, it is *the inheritance of the Saints.* 6. As the greatest blessing, such as Heaven & all that is in it, are communicable to lost sinners; so, that any cometh to Heaven, proceedeth not from his own merit or worth, but from Gods free gift: for, it is called an *inheritance*, or, as it is in the Original, *a Lot*, in allusion to the Land of Canaan, where every Tribe enjoyed a portion, not according to their own choice or worth, but as God did measure out unto them by lots; see *Job. 18. 10, 11.* 7. None who are unfit or unmeet for Heaven, getteth access to it: *He makes us meet* before we partake of that Inheritance. 8. Every man in his natural state, is unfit for Heaven, as being under Gods curse, *Gal. 3. 13.* an heir of Hell and wrath, *Eph. 2. 3.* He finds us unmeet, and *maketh us meet.* 9. It is not in the power of fallen man, being dead in sins and trespasses (*Eph. 2. 1.*) to quicken himself, and come to God, whereby he might be meet for such a glorious Inheritance; it is only God who *maketh* lost sinners meet: *who hath made us meet.*

Verf. 13. *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son.*

He explained how God doth make us meet, to wit; by drawing us out of that corrupt state of nature, wherein we were detained as slaves, and translating us into the state of grace, called Christ's Kingdom, as *Rom. 14. 17.*

This he doth in our effectual calling. *Doct. 1.* Man's natural state is a state of darkness without the light of saving knowledge. *1 Cor. 2. 14.* Solid comfort. *14. 57. 22.* or true holiness. *Eph. 2. 2.* which in Scripture is called light. *Math. 5. 16.* for our natural state is here called darkness. 2. Every man is kept in slavery under the power of sin and Satan. *Eph. 2. 2.* so long as he continueth in that his natural state; we are even under the power of darkness. 3. The affections of man by nature are so far engaged to this sinful state, and so far a slave unto it, that except he be plucked out by the strong hand, there is no freeing of him from it; so far is he from rescuing himself by any power preserved in his own free-will after the fall of Adam: *He must deliver us by main force, or, pluck us away, as the word signifieth: from the power of darkness.* 4. Though God doth not constrain the will of man by force, yet he employeth omnipotent power to remove his unwillingness, and to make him willing to obey his call. *Eph. 2. 19. Who hath delivered us.* 5. There is no middle state betwixt the power of darkness, and the state of grace: all who breathe, are either in the one, or the other: the Apostle mentioneth no other state, but the Power of darkness, and the Kingdom of his dear Son. 6. The state of grace, and Gods favour, is called a Kingdom: because by grace the hearts of men are subdued to God, as King, whose laws are full of equity and moderation. *Psa. 19. 7.* and who moveth the wills of men sweetly, as being willing subjects in the day of his power. *Psal. 110. 3.* and doth not drive them on by tyranny or force. 7. The state of grace, is, the Kingdom of his dear Son, who is appointed of the Father to be head of the Church, by whom all do enter that do come to the Kingdom. *Job. 14. 6.* and all grace is derived from God the fountain, through him; yea, he dispenseth grace and glory as he thinketh fit. *1 Cor. 5. 31.* even he whom the Father loveth dearly, and through whom all the subjects of this Kingdom are dearly beloved also. *Gal. 5. 5. The Kingdom of his dear Son.*

Ver. 14. *In whom we have redemption through his blood even the forgiveness of sins.*

He explaineth further how we are meet for Heaven, and delivered from the power of darknesse, to wit, by our Redemption in Christ, from sin, Satan and wrath, by virtue of a price paid by the Mediator to the Fathers justice, even his blood, which Redemption he explaineth from its principal part, remission of sins in justification: for, *Redemption* is not here taken for the laying down of the price by Christ (as *Luk* 2. 38.) but for the fruits flowing from it, not for that compleat redemption and freedom from sin and misery, which the godly shall enjoy at the last day, *Rom.* 8. 23. *Eph.* 4. 30. but for that measure of freedom which Believers do enjoy here by faith, so that remission of sins is a principal part of it. *Dott. 1.* All men by nature are in a state of bondage to sin, Satan, and wrath; so there is no freedom from this state, except Redemption go before: the word *Redemption* supponeth both these. 2. No way of Redemption could be accepted but that which is by giving of a ransom and recompence for the wrong done by sin unto Divine Justice: there is no redemption, but *through blood*. 3. None was fit to give this ransom but Jesus Christ, God and Man: *In whom*, to wit, Christ, *we have redemption*. 4. Nothing performed by Christ could be a sufficient ransom for this end, except he had crowned all his other actions and sufferings, by laying down his life, and undergoing a bloody and violent death: for, *we have redemption through his blood*; not as excluding his former obedience, but as being the complement and crowning of it, *Rom.* 5. 18, 19. 5. Though Jesus Christ did pay this ransom unto God, *Eph.* 5. 2. and not to Satan, whose slaves we are by nature: yet by virtue of the ransom paid, we are delivered from Satans slavery, and sins dominion: for, the Apostle clearing what he had said, ver. 13. of our being delivered from the power of darknesse, he giveth this as a

reason, In whom we have redemption through his blood; When God the just Judge was satisfied, Satan the Jay-
 lor, and unjust Tyrant, did lose his right to keep us lon-
 ger in bonds; so that Christ doth justly deliver the Re-
 deemed Ones from him by force, *Heb. 2. 14. Matth. 1. 2.*
29. yd 6. Though Christ by his obedience and suffering,
 did pay unto the Fathers Justice: a sufficient ransom for
 our Redemption; yet we do not actually partake of that
 freedom until we be in him, and by faith united to him:
In whom we have redemption. 7. Sin is the fountain-
 cause of our slavery and bondage, so that it must be
 removed before our bondage cease: thus, speaking of
 our Redemption, he instanteth it in *the remission of sin.*
 8. Because sin is a debt, obliging us either to pay an in-
 finite price, or to undertake eternal wrath, *Gen. 2. 17.*
 therefore that sin might be removed, the Son of God be-
 hooved to shed his blood for our ransom: We must have
redemption through his blood, otherwise there is no *remis-
 sion of sin.* 9. When this ransom is laid hold upon by
 faith, and we thereby ingrafted in him, the guilt of sin
 is freely remitted, and we compleatly pardoned; so be-
 ing in him, *we have forgiveness of sins.* *John 1. 7. and 12.*
1. John 1. 9. and 12. 1. John 1. 9. and 12. 1. John 1. 9. and 12.
Ver. 13. Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-
 born of every creature, *John 1. 1. and 12. 1. John 1. 1. and 12.*
 The Apostle, having mentioned our Redemption, doth
 here fall upon a description of the Redeemer; and this,
 both, that in his worth the worthlesnesse of all other
 things, whether of Angels, or dead Ceremonies, upon
 which the false Apostles did place equal honour with
 Christ (*chap. 2. v. 8.*) might be seen; as also that the
 sufficiency of his blood, in order to the redemption of
 sinners, might the better appear, as being the blood of
 such an one who is here described; First, From his in-
 eternal relation to God: *He is the image of the invisible God,*
 as well in respect of his eternal generation, being the ex-
 press image of the Father, *Heb. 1. 3.* as also, that being
 made

made man, God the Father did in him, and by him, as a lively image, set forth unto us his glorious attributes of wisdom, mercy, righteousness and power, *John 14. 9.* Secondly, From his eternal relation to all things created; *He is the first-born of every creature*, as being from all eternity begotten of the Father before any thing was created, and Lord and Heir of all the creatures, as the first-born was among the Brethren, *Gen. 27. 37. Doct. 1.* The knowledge of Christs worth, doth contribute much to confirm and illustrate the doctrine of mans Redemption; the excellency and fulnesse of Christ, being that strong Basis and corner-stone to uphold, and the great mean to carry on, and throughly to effectuate that admirable work, *1 Cor. 3. 11.* Hence, speaking of man's Redemption, he inserteth in this verse and the three following, this excellent description of Christ, *Who is the image, &c.* 2. As the Divine Nature considered in it self is invisible, it being impossible with bodily eyes to behold him at any time; yea, and also with the eyes of the mind, except indirectly, while we are in this life, *1 Cor. 13. 12.* so the first person of the Godhead is conceived to be in a special manner invisible; because he did never, at least very seldom, appear in any visible shape to men, as the Son did frequently to the Patriarchs, and at his incarnation unto all; the holy Spirit did also appear in the form of a Dove, *Matth. 3. 16.* and of fiery tongues, *Acts 2. 3, 4.* for, the Father is here meant, while he saith, *the image of the invisible God.* 3. As the Son is of the same essence, and one God with the Father; so he is a distinct person from him: for, he is the substantial image of the Father; and an image must be somewhat distinct from that, whereof it is an image. 4. We cannot take up God aright, savingly, or to our comfort, but when we look upon him, as he is represented in the Man-Christ; without whom God is a consuming fire to sinners; and in whom he is well pleased: So the man Christ is *the image of the invisible God*, a glasse wherein we may behold him. 5. Jesus Christ is true God, having an eternal being; he is not, as

he is God, in the rank of Creatures, but hath a Lordship and Dominion over them all; so much is in these words, *the first-born of every creature*: he is *first-born*, who was Lord over his brethren, *Gen. 27. 39.* but *not first created*; and so there is no ground from this Scripture, to reckon him among the Creatures.

Verf. 16. For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.

17. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

He prosecutes the relation which Christ hath to things created, holding him forth, First, as their Creator: illustrated from a three-fold division of things created: First, from their place, *things in heaven, and things in earth*. Secondly, from their natures, *visible or invisible*. Thirdly, he divideth the Angels, one kind of the invisible creatures, in *thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers*; whereby probably is meant the severall degrees and dignities of Angels; but what those are in particular, is wholly unknown to us. Secondly, he sets him forth as the last end of all the Creatures, *v. 16.* Thirdly, as being before them all in time, and so explaineth how he is *the first-born of every creature*: and Fourthly, as the upholder of all the creatures by his power and providence, *v. 17.* *Doff. 1.* How bent men are to have but low thoughts of Christ, and of the ransom payed by him for the redemption of sinners, appeareth from the Apostle's multiplying of conceptions, to set forth his excellencie and worth. 1. Jesus Christ is eternall God, and so his blood of infinite worth, *all things being created by him*, as is twice affirmed in this verse, which can be said of none but God, *Gen. 1. 1.* 3. As the Father hath created all things, *Gen. 1. 1.* and upholdeth all things being made,

by

by the word of his power, *Job* 17. 28. so doth also the
 Son; all those externall works are common to the whole
 three Persons, who are onely distinguished by their in-
 ward Personall properties, and order of working: for,
 by him, to wit, the Son, were all things created; and by
 him all things consist. 4. There is varietie of Creatures
 of different kinds, and different excellencies, that man
 may see somewhat of God in every kind, (*Pf*. 104. through
 the whole) and have somewhat whereupon to exercise
 every one of his externall senses, and every one of his
 inward faculties for that end: there being things *visible*,
 and so subject to senses; and things *invisible*, which can-
 not be taken up but by the understanding: *things*
that are in heaven, that are in earth, visible, invisible. 5. All
 things created, even the most excellent, not exclu-
 ding the glorious Angels, and those who most trans-
 cend others in power and glory, are created by Christ,
 the work of his hands: and so not onely are in the rank
 of Creatures, but of his Creatures, and would be so
 looked upon by us; that he may have his own room in
 hearts, all other things being contained in theirs; for,
Paul (that they might not detract any thing of the ho-
 nour due to Christ, by giving it to Angels) extolls him
 as the Creator of Angels, and of all things, thereby de-
 pressing them as poor, weak, dependent Creatures; by
 him all things were created, *that are in heaven, that are in*
earth, visible, invisible, whether they be thrones, etc. 6. All
 things are created for Christ; the manifestation of his
 glory as God, being the chief end of all, so that he is the
alpha and *Omega* of them all, *Rev.* 1. 8. all things being
 as from him, so for him. The setting forth of his glory is
 a rent due by all Creatures, and is accordingly performed
 by them: some give it in an active way, as Saints, and
 Angels, *Rev.* 19. 1. some in a passive way, as damned
 men, and Devils, *Rom.* 9. 17. and all in an objective
 way, as having Gods glorious attributes etched about
 them, and shining forth in them, in some one, in some
 another; in the Elect, mercy; in the Reprobate, justice.

Rom. 9. 22. and in all the Creatures, wisdom, power, and goodnesse, *Psal.* 19. 1. for, saith he, *all things were for him.* 7. All things created, whether in Heaven or Earth, visible or invisible, as they have their first being from Christ by creation: so they are continued and preserved in that their being, by his providence: if he should but with-draw his upholding hand, they would quickly return unto their first nothing, *Pf.* 90. 3. for, *by him all things consist.*

Verf. 18. *And he is the head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.*

He describeth Christ, thirdly, with relation to his Church, showing first he is her Head. Secondly, the beginning, root, and fountain cause of the Church, and of all the spirituall graces thereof. Thirdly, the first who rose from the dead, never to taste again of death, the only one that ever rose by his own power, and who shall raise again all his members, whereby his glory is made famous in all things, death it self not being excepted. *Ps.* 1. There is the same relation betwixt Christ and his Church, which is in the naturall body betwixt the head and the members: Christ, as man, being of the same nature with the Church, *Heb.* 2. 14. the same holy Spirit, which posited our grace on him, *Pf.* 45. 1. without measure, *Job.* 3. 34. acting and residing in his members, *Rom.* 8. 9. 11. all spirituall life and motion, *Col.* 2. 19. yea, the common influences of the Spirit, flowing from Christ to the Church, *Eph.* 4. 7. there being an indissoluble tie betwixt Christ and every Believer, *Job.* 10. 28. Christ being of much more worth than the Church is, and sufficiently instructed with power and right to prescribe Laws unto, and to govern and save the Church, *Eph.* 5. 23, 24. the Church again being subject to Christ's rule and Government, *Eph.* 5. 24. and, if separated from him, would be wholly dead, as deprived of all spirituall life

life and motion. *Joh. 15. 4.* for which causes, Christ, and
 onely Christ, is the Head of the Church. 2. Jesus Christ
 is the first beginning, root, and fountain-cause of the
 Church, as being that second *Adam*, from whom all that
 new Spirituall birth doth flow, *1 Cor. 15. 45.* and whose
 vertue, purchased and applyed by him, reneweth the
 heart, and maketh the graces of the Spirit bud up in it
Cant. 4. 16. so, in relation to the Church, he is called, the
 active beginning, or first principle and author thereof
who is the beginning. 3. As Jesus Christ was once
 among the dead; so, he arose by his own power from
 death, to immortality and life, whereby he hath so van-
 quished death, that it must render up all his followers;
1 Cor. 15. 54. each of whom shall rise again from death
 by that same vertue, whereby Christ did raise up him-
 self; for, in this respect, he is *the first-begotten from the*
dead, *1 Cor. 15. 20.* He maketh them partake of his Re-
 surrection, as the first-born did give the rest a share of
 his Father's goods, whereof he was Heir. 4. There is no-
 thing of Christ, no not his very crosse and death, whereby
 his dignity and worth is not made famous; he having by
 death, destroyed him who had the power of death, *Heb. 2.*
14. and thereby made death it self a passage unto life: for
he is the firstborn from the dead, thus in all things, even death
 it self not being excepted, *he might have the pre-eminence.*
 5. A holy soul, zealous for the glory of Christ, will make
 this his study, to gather matter for extolling Christ, even
 from these things which would seem to obscure his ho-
 nour most; thus *Paul* is not content to have him advan-
 ced in his works of Creation and Providence; and in
 his Headship over his Church, except he shew, that even
 his death did bring honour to him, in relation to which,
 he saith, that in all things *he might have the pre-emi-
 nence.* *Ver. 19.* For it pleased the Father, that in him should all
 fulnesse dwell,
 20. And (having made peace through the blood of his
 crosse)

himself by him to reconcile all things unto himself, by him. I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in

The Apostle giveth a reason why the Redeemer Christ was to be such a Person, as is before described, taken from the Father's will and pleasure, that he should be one filled with all fulnesse, both of the Godhead dwelling in him, chap. 2. 9. and of the graces of the Spirit without measure, *John* 3. 34. that so he might be thoroughly furnished to discharge that great work of Mediation, in reconciling the universality of the Blest (whether already glorified, or yet upon earth) to a provoked God, having removed the enmity which was betwixt God and them, by the merite of his sufferings. *Diss.* 1. The restoring of broken man to friendship with God, and all things tending to it, especially, that Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, should under-go the work of Mediation for that end, was a thing well-pleasing unto and appointed by the Father, upon which is grounded the Father's acceptation of what he did for us, as if we had done it our selves, which otherwayes he might have rejected. *It pleased the Father.* It's an emphaticall word in the Originall, implying no lesse than an unexpressible affection to, and liking of a thing. 2. That any be the Churches Head, it is necessary that he be full of God, and of all created graces, even both God and Man; and therefore it is no lesse than blasphemie for sinfull man, Pope, or any other, to assume this Title unto himself: for, giving a reason of this, among other things, why Christ is the Churches Head, he saith, *for it pleased the Father, that in him all fulnesse should dwell;* importing that none destitute of this fulnesse, is fit to be the Head of the Church. 3. God calleth none to any Office, but such as he fitteth for it; for, being to imploy Christ for reconciling all things to himself, *it pleased the Father, that in him all fulnesse should dwell.* 4. Christ the Mediatour, is indued with all fulnesse of the Godhead and created graces;

graces. In him all fulness dwelt. 7. No less furniture nor this fulness was required for the thorough discharging of the Mediatorship Office; and making up of friendship betwixt a provoked God, and rebellious Man; for, in order to that, in him all fulness did dwell. 6. Man now fallen was once in a state of friendship with God; for, reconciliation is the making up of old friendship, and by him to reconcile. 7. All mankind did fall from the state of favour and friendship with God, through Adams transgression, Rom. 5. 12. for, reconciliation supposeth breaking off of friendship, and by him to reconcile. 8. As friendship with God may be again recovered; so, the first motion of it cometh from God, who received the wrong, and not from us who gave it: *It pleased the Father by him to reconcile.* 9. Nothing engaged God to make or prosecute such a motion, but his goodwill and pleasure; no need he stood of our friendship, nor any losse which could come to him by our enmity and hatred. *Joh. 12. 32. It pleased the Father to reconcile all things unto himself.* 10. Though Christ, and grace be intended for, and accordingly doth light onely upon few, *Matth. 7. 14.* yet the Gospel and Promises by which Christ and free grace is revealed and offered, is drawn up in the most comprehensive expressions, and this, that none may hereby be excluded from laying hold on Christ and free grace; but such as do exclude themselves, *Eph. 1. 9. To reconcile all things, whether things in heaven, or things in earth;* by which broad expression, is meant onely the Elect (for, there is an universality and world even of those, *2 Cor. 5. 19.*) and not all the Creatures, nor Devils, or Reprobates, *Joh. 17. 9.* Yea, to speak properly, nor yet the Elect Angels, who having never sinned, was never reconciled, though improperly they may be said to be so, in so far as through Christ they were confirmed in grace, being put beyond all reach and possibility of sinning. 11. As the making up of friendship betwixt God and fallen Man, could not be without a Mediator; so, none in Heaven or Earth could

could be in all things fitted to mediate in this matter; but
 Jesus Christ, God and man; by him to reconcile. 12. The
 making up of this friendship did stand the Mediator no
 lesse than his blood; he did bear the chastisement of our
 peace, and laid down his life by a most shameful, pain-
 full, and cursed death; that so the justice of God being
 compleady satisfied for our wrong, we might enjoy Gods
 peace and favour with life: for, he sheweth the way
 how he reconciled all, *having made peace* (which is all
 one with reconciliation) *through the blood of the crosse,*
 that is, his blood shed upon the crosse.

Verf. 21. *And you that were sometime alienated, and enemies*
only in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he recon-
ciled,

22. *In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy*
and unblameable, and unreprovable in his sight.

What he spoke of reconciliation in general; he appli-
 eth to the Collossians in particular; hereby to make way
 for the following exhortation; and having shewn the
 miserable state wherein they were by nature, as being
 not only strangers, but enemies to God, and that because
 of sin in them, He declareth the gracious change wrought
 in them they being put in a state of friendship with God;
 which Christ had purchased for them, by taking on a
 true body, subject to fleshly infirmities, though without
 sin, *Heb. 4. 15.* and by suffering death in it, and all this
 that they might be presented free from all sin, and perfect
 in holinesse before God in the last day. *Doct. 1.* That
 general Truths may not be without fruit, being looked
 upon as remote from us, Ministers would labour pru-
 dently to apply them to the particular state, and severall
 cases of hearers; so doth Paul here, *You hath he reconciled,*
 2. As those who are at peace with God, were once in as
 desperate an estate as others: so it concerneth them who
 are delivered from that state, and would have the sense
 of that mercy kept still lively and fresh, and not be puffed

up with their present good condition, despising others, to be frequently minding that woful case, wherein they were when first free-grace did lay hold upon them; for Paul to commend this peace-making mercy in God doth mind them: *they were sometimes alienated, and enemies in their mind.* 13. The state of man by nature is most miserable; as being first, estranged from God, having no spiritual communion with him, Gen. 3. 8, 9, 24. nor any right or claim to that happiness which floweth from the enjoyment of him, Psa. 58. 3. So, *they were sometimes alienated*, to wit, by Adams fall, as the fountain-cause. Secondly, they are enemies to God, as fighting against Gods revealed will, Rom. 6. 19, and hating God, Rom. 8. 7; though not as creator and preserver of the world, yet as he is a just Judge, armed with vengeance against those who do wickedly; and God is an enemy to them, Isa. 63. 10. who, though he love his Elect even in their unregenerate state with an everlasting love, Eph. 1. 4. yet so long as they are unrenewed, and have not fled to Christ by faith, he cannot adjudge them to eternal life, or look upon them any other way, than as men under an actual obligation to lie under the curse of the Law, which is eternal wrath; so, *they are enemies.* Thirdly, As the cause of this enmity betwixt God and man, is no wrong done on Gods part, (Mic. 6. 3.) but mans own sin, and wrong done by him to God: so the great part of man's misery by nature, consisteth in this his sin, whereby the chiefest part of him, even his soul, and all the faculties of it, to wit, his reason, (Eph. 4. 18.) will, and affections, Gen. 6. 5. (all of which are here signified by the mind) are wholly corrupted, from whence doth flow all his actual wickednesse, and so much of it, that every action of his is polluted, as proceeding from such a filthy fountain: *Enemies in your mind by wicked works.* Doct. 4. As there is nothing in us to bud or buy free-grace with; so by past misery, though arrived at the height of enmity against God, will not impede Jesus Christ to work a miracle of mercy, where he intendeth to be gracious: so

just who have sinned; yet not hath he reconciled. 4. The
 reconciliation of the Elect unto God, is not from crea-
 ture, nor the time of Christs death, nor at any time
 before the sinner doth believe in Jesus Christ. Election
 indeed is from eternity, Eph. 1. 4. and satisfaction for sin
 was given to the Fathers justice by Christ upon the
 cross, Job. 19. 20. but justification is not until the self-
 condemned sinner assent to the bargain, and enter him-
 self heir unto Christs purchase by faith: for, he speaks
 of them as now being reconciled, having embraced the
 Gospel, when before they were enemies. 5. The second
 person of the blessed Trinity, in order to our reconcilia-
 tion with God, behoved to be incarnate, taking on a true
 fleshy body, not in appearance only, and subject to all
 the common and sinlesse infirmities of flesh, *reconciled*
in the body of his flesh. 6. It was necessary also, in order
 to our reconciliation, for Jesus Christ to suffer death in
 his body; that thus Christ our surety, and one of the
 same nature with us, being seized upon, we the principal
 debtors might be absolved and set free, Job. 18. 8. yet,
who hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death;
 8. As reconciliation with God hath holiness of life fol-
 lowing on it; so the sanctifying of those who are re-
 conciled, is a work undertaken by Christ, which he is to
 carry on from one degree unto another, until he compleat
 it at death, and so present the justified person holy, im-
 blamable, and unapprovable in his sight, that is, perfectly
 sanctified, as the multiplying of words to one purpose
 doth import, which is not to be accomplished untill
 death, no, not fully in both soul and body joynd to-
 gether, untill the day of his second coming.

Ver. 23. *If ye continue in the faith grounded and sealed; and
 be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which ye
 have heard, and which was preached to every creature
 which is under Heaven; whereof I Paul am made a
 Minister.*

In the third part of the chapter, he exhorts them to
 per-

persevere in the faith of the former doctrine, not questioning the truth thereof, nor quitting those hopes of good things to come, which was begotten in them by it; and that, because what he had spoken of their reconciliation, did depend upon their perseverance, and the doctrine was the same with that which at Christ's command was taught through the world, by Apostles, and which he himself was called by God to preach among the Gentiles. *Diss.* 1. Though a Minister may speak to a mixed multitude indefinitely, sometimes as to regenerate persons; *1 Cor.* 6, 13. because the better part are so; *Mal.* 3, 16, 17. And sometimes as to unregenerate. *Ques.* 19. 4. because the greater part ordinarily are such. *Matth.* 22, 141 yet it is safest for him alwayes to guard what he so speaketh by propounding some marks and qualifications of those to whom the thing spoken doth belong; lest people stumble by conceiving their state to be either better or worse than really it is. *Rev.* 3, 17. So *Paul*, having spoken (ver. 22) indefinitely of them all, as being reconciled, he doth now restrict his speech only to those who had saving faith, and would persevere in it; *If ye continue in the faith.* 2. All those who are reconciled to God, having fled to Christ by faith, shall undoubtedly persevere unto the end, as being kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. *1 Pet.* 1, 5. for, he maketh the reality of their reconciliation depend upon their faith; *Thou hath been reconciled* (ver. 22) *if ye continue.* 3. Exhortations unto perseverance are to be pressed upon, and the danger of Apostasy to be held forth even unto those whose perseverance is in it self most certain; these being means whereby the Lord worketh perseverance in them; for, here is such an exhortation unto those who were really reconciled, and so should undoubtedly persevere; and the danger of not-obeying hinted at, to be no less than to die in a state of enmity to God; *If ye continue in the faith.* 4. It is not sufficient once to assent to the truth of the Gospel in our understanding, and to embrace the good things offered to us by it in our will and affections.

ous, but we must persevere in so doing; for, this is the faith of that doctrine in which he exhorted them to continue, as faith relates both to the will and understanding; *If ye continue in the faith.* 5. That Christians may continue constant in the faith of the Gospel, as well by assenting to the truth of it, as by embracing the good things offered by it; it is not sufficient to have some fluctuating opinion about the truth of it, but they must endeavour a rooted and well grounded persuasion that it is the undoubted truth of God, *Eph. 4. 14.* Nor is it sufficient to embrace the good things offered slightly, conditionally, or with a reserve; but sure hold would be taken of them, as we would grip to a thing upon life and death, *1 Tim. 1. 5.* This firmness and fixedness of faith, both in the understanding and will, in order to perseverance against the blasts of tentations and tryals, is set down in the words, *grounded and settled.* The first is a metaphor taken from edifices, whose foundations use to be laid upon sure ground; the other taken from seas, in which they who sit are unmovable: *If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled.* 6. As the hope of life eternal, and of those other good things held forth in the Gospel, is a grace which is hardly maintained; there being so many blasts of several tentations to drive us from it, *Luke 22. 31, 32.* So nothing tendeth more to the strengthening of hope, than fixedness in the grace of faith: and as we turn fluctuating and irresolute in the point of believing, so will the grace of hope be more or less shaken: for, these two are conjoynd, *continuing in the faith, grounded and settled, and not being moved away from the hope of the Gospel.* 7. It is the duty of Ministers to keep up the credit and esteem of their fellow-labourers among their Flocks; (though they be much inferior for parts and graces unto themselves) if so they teach sincerely the same truth, that the work of God may succeed the better in their hands; for, probably because the person and doctrine of *Epaphras*, as being no Apostle, but an ordinary Minister, was the less esteemed of by many; *Paul conciliates,*

edilator respect to them both among those Colossians, by shewing the doctrine preached by him, was the same with that which was taught by the Apostles to every creature under Heaven, that is, to all Mankind, the most noble of creatures; and to some of all sorts of men, not in Judea only, but also among the Gentiles, which he hath heard, to wit, by Epaphras, and which was preached to every creature under Heaven. 8. As none ought to take on the Calling of the Ministry, but such as are called to it; so, much weight is not to be laid on the testimony of those who run, and are not sent: for, Paul being to confirm the doctrine preached by Epaphras from his own authority, doth mention his calling; *Whereof I Paul am made a Minister.* 9. The testimony of a called Minister to the truth of a doctrine ought to have its due respect; *Whereof I am made a Minister.* 10. The testimony of no particular man whatsoever, ought to be further trusted, nor it doth agree with that Gospel which was preached by the Apostles to every creature under Heaven: for, Paul, to make his testimony bear weight, mentioneth not only his Calling, but also that he preached the same doctrine which was preached unto every creature; *Whereof I Paul am made a Minister,* saith he.

Verf. 24. *Who now rejoyce in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his Bodies sake, which is the Church.*

Having confirmed the truth of his doctrine from the authority of his own Apostleship, ver. 23. he now confirmeth his Apostleship from his sufferings and christian courage under them, removing also thereby the scandal of his sufferings, in respect they were his share of those sufferings which are measured out by the providence of God to be undergone by mystical Christ, the Church; and that they were for the Colossians, and the whole Churches good. *Doct. 1.* Christians and Ministers of the Gospel chiefly, are to be so far from running

sufferings, when God calleth them to suffer, or from grudging, or heartlesse discouragement under sufferings, (*Luke* 9. 26.) that they ought to think it their glory to suffer any thing for Christ and Truth, and so to rejoyce in sufferings: And Gods Servants may attain to such a frame of Spirit as this is under sufferings; So did *Paul*; *Who now rejoyce in my sufferings*, saith he. 2. As people are apt to stumble and cast at the Gospel, because of contempt, reproach, and other hardships under which those who preach the Gospel do for the most part labour (*Mat.* 13. 55, 56 57.) their stumbling might be in reason prevented, if they would consider, that all those sufferings are occasioned in a great part by them, in so far, that if it were not for respect to the souls of people, Ministers might do much to shift the crosse, as well as others; *Paul* removed the scandal of his sufferings, thus; *My sufferings are for you*, saith he. If he had not preached the Gospel to the Gentiles, he might have been free of the crosse. 3. The sufferings of *Paul*, and of any other Saint, are the sufferings of Christ, and the filling up of his sufferings: not as if Christ's personal sufferings for the redemption of sinners were imperfect, and so to be supplied by the sufferings of others, see *Heb.* 10. 14. but such is that sympathy betwixt Christ and Believers, *Acts* 9. 4. and so strict is that union among them, whereby he and they do but make up one mystical Christ, *1 Cor.* 12. 12. that in those respects the sufferings of the Saints, are his sufferings, to wit, the sufferings of mystical Christ, which are not perfect nor filled up, until every Member of his Body endure their own allotted portion and share: *I fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ*. 4. All that *Paul*, or any of the Elect suffereth, are but small reliects, being compared with that which Christ hath suffered, as the drops upon the brim of the cup: the great wave of affliction did first beat on him, and being thereby broken, some small sparks of it only do light upon us; *I fill up that which is behind*, or the reliects and hinder parts of the sufferings of Christ. 5. The cup of affliction and

sufferings goeth about by course and round: as Christ did drink of it first, the Apostles only standing by, Job. 18. 8. so their course came next, 1 Cor. 4. 9. and thus it hath gone from hand to hand ever since: all are not made to drink of it at once, that some may still be in a capacity to pity, help, and sympathize with others, 2 Cor. 8. 14. so the word *tended full up*, signifieth to do a thing in our own course or turn. 6. As the personal sufferings of Christ were for the Churches redemption, and to satisfie the Fathers justice for the sins of the Elect, *Mat. 20. v. 28.* which he did compleatly, Job. 19. 30. So the sufferings of the Saints are also for the Churches good, though not for her redemption or expiation of sin, neither in its guilt nor punishment, 1 Job. 1. 7. yet to edifie the Church by their example, Jam. 5. 10. to comfort her under sufferings, 2 Cor. 1. 6. and to confirm that Truth for which they do suffer, Phil. 2. 17. In which respects Paul affirmeth his afflictions were for *Christ's bodies sake, which is the Church.*

Vers. 25. Whereof I am made a Minister according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God.

He confirmeth his Apostleship yet further, from his calling to that Office; and withall giveth a reason of his suffering cheerfully for the Churches good; he was called to be a Minister unto the Church, chiefly among the Gentiles, of whom these Colossians were a part, and that by the appointment of God; that he might open up and preach the word of the Gospel fully, or that God by his Ministry might fulfill that word of Prophecy and Promise of calling the Gentiles in the dayes of the Gospel, Zech. 2. 11. for, *to fulfill the word of God*, may be taken either of these wayes. *Diss. 1.* The greater honour, or the more eminent office a man doth enjoy in the Church, he standeth under stricter obligation to undergo affliction for the Churches good, and may expect to meet with

the more of a sufferer: for, this engageth *Paul* to rejoyce in his afflictions for the Church; of which Church, saith he, *I am made a Minister*. 2. Ministers are but Gods Stewards and Servants under him, who being the great Master of that Family, which is his House and Church, *1 Tim. 3. 15.* will have all things ordered in it, especially the number of Office-bearers, their calling to, and their carriage in their Office (*Eph. 4. 11. 1 Tim. 3. 1. &c.*) according to his own will and prescript; so *Paul* was made a Minister according to the dispensation of God; the word *dispensation*, signifies the ordering of things belonging to a Family by him who is Master of it. 3. Though the Apostles were not tied by virtue of their Office unto any certain nation or place, their charge being the broad world, *Matth. 28. 19.* yet because every one could not actually, and with advantage to the Church, discharge their Office towards all; therefore either by divine appointment, or mutual agreement, they did divide their Charge among them, *Gal. 2. 7.* yet so, as every one might exercise their Apostolick Authority in every place, as occasion offered, even without a particular Call from the Church, *Act. 10. 34.* which ordinary Pastors cannot do without the bounds of their own Charge, *1 Cor. 14. 48.* In this respect *Paul* was to exercise his Apostleship among the Gentiles; which is given to me for you, saith he. 4. The Ministers of Jesus Christ must preach the Word of God, and his full Word, keeping up nothing of the Word, *Act. 20. 27.* and imploy the uttermost of their parts, time and pains in so doing, *1 Tim. 4. 13.* for, this is to fulfill the word of God, according to the first sense given in the Exposition. 5. What ever word of promise is given to the Church, though it be never so unlikely, it must and shall be fulfilled in Gods time; for, *Paul* is made a Minister to fulfill the word, that is, the word of promise for calling of the Gentiles, according to the latter sense.

Verf. 16. *Even the myſterie which hath been hid from ages, and from generations, but now is made manifeſt to his ſaints.*

He confirmeth the truth preached by Epaphras further, from the worth which is in it ſelf, by ſhewing it is an ancient doctrine, hid from the former ages of the Church, but now made manifeſt in the fulneſſe of time to his holy Apoſtles immediatly, and by them to all other ſaints, *Eph. 3. 5.* **Doct. 1.** The Goſpel, or doctrine of Chriſtian Religion concerning Chriſt his Incarnation, Natures, Perſon, Offices, Death, Reſurrection, and Salvation thereby acquired unto loſt ſinners, (*1 Tim. 3. 16.*) is an ancient doctrine, as having been before ages and generations, though not revealed; *which hath been hid from ages.* **2.** This doctrine is a myſterie, a thing in it ſelf dark and ſecret, ſo that Nature's light would never have found it out, except it had been made manifeſt, yea, and is ſcarce-ly capable of it when it is revealed: and more particularly, the counſell of God in calling of the Gentiles to the fellowſhip of the Goſpel, without tying them to circumciſion and the other duties of the ceremoniall Law, was wholly hid from the Gentiles themſelves, and from the greateſt part of the Jews, who dreamed of no ſuch thing, yea, the Prophets themſelves did know but little of it: for, this is a part of the myſterie whereof he ſpeaketh chiefly here; *even the myſterie which hath been hid from ages:* See *Eph. 3. 3. 5. 6.* **3.** Divine mercies are upon the growing hand; Chriſt and free grace in its full extent, was but dark under the old diſpenſation, as being covered with a vail of many ceremonies, *2 Cor. 3. 13.* but now the vail is remoyed, Chriſt and free grace are clearly preached, and ſhine forth in their native beauty and luſtre; *but now is made manifeſt.* **4.** Though the Goſpel be now made manifeſt, yet they are onely ſaints and truly gracious, who attain unto the full, through, and ſaving knowledge of it, *2 Cor. 4. 3. 4.* wicked men have

some insight in it, but they know it not so, as to prize it, 1 Cor. 1. 18. so as to believe it, and venture their Heaven and happinesse upon it, Job. 5. 40. nor yet so, as to walk like it, Matth. 7. 22, 23. Thus it is a *mysterie made manifest unto the saints.*

Verf. 27. To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mysterie among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

He sheweth, that the cause of this manifestation was God's will and pleasure. and withall commendeth and explaineth the thing manifested, as being a rich and glorious mysterie, the sum whereof is Christ himself; who, dwelling in us by faith, is the hope of glory. *Diss. 1.* That the doctrine of salvation through Christ, was so long hid from the Gentiles, and but obscurely propounded to the Jews, and now in the fulnesse of time made manifest; and, that it is revealed to one Nation, and not to another, and worketh effectually in some, and not in others, (Matth. 1 1. 25, 26.) proceedeth from God's good-will and pleasure, so that it is a matter full of somerity and rashnesse to inquire unto any higher cause; the Apostle rests on this, *to whom the Lord would make known.* 2. As the Gospel is a mysterie, so it is a rich one, wherein God layeth out the great and unsearchable treasures of his mercy, goodnesse and grace, Job. 1. 17. and the embracers of this doctrine are made truly rich, as being restored unto favour with God, clothed with a perfect righteousnesse, Rev. 3. 18. having received a new right unto all the creatures through Christ, Tit. 1. 15. those are riches, without which the whole world is but miserable beggers, Rev. 3. 17. *What is the riches of this mysterie.* 3. The Gospel is a mysterie full of glory, no doctrine manifesting more of God's glory in all his attributes of mercy, wisdom, justice & truth, Luk. 2 14. and they who imbrace it, are made thereby glorious, as having a promise of a right unto, yea and begun possession of

of glory now, *Job. 3. 26.* and shall attain to the full possession of glory hereafter, *1 Job. 3. 2.* for, he speaketh of the glory of *this mysterie.* 4. It is no small mysterie, that Christ should take up house with, and dwell in sinners; *this mysterie,* saith he, *which is Christ in you.* 5. Jesus Christ is the Sum of the Gospel, in whom there is much hid and glorious riches, no lesse than treasures of wisdom and knowledge, *chap. 2. v. 3.* So the Apostle, explaining what is this mysterie, and the riches and glory of it, gives Christ for all, *which is Christ in you.* 6. Christ dwelling by faith in the hearts of people here, is the hope of that glory to be possessed hereafter, as being the Author of that hope, *2 Tbesf. 2. 16;* as also the earnest of that glory, *Eph. 1. 14.* the full accomplishment whereof, shall be the full injoying of him, *Phil. 1. 23.* whom we do now injoy but in part, and by faith, *1 Cor. 13. 12.* *Christ in you the hope of glory.*

Verf. 28. *Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.*

He returneth to that argument, which he used formerly to confirm the doctrine preached to them by *Epaphras*, taken from his preaching of the same doctrine himself, and sheweth the principall subject of his preaching was Christ, together with the way how he preached him, labouring to rectifie the will by *warning*, and to inform the judgement by *instructing*, concealing nothing of that saving wisdom revealed in Scripture; and this without respect of persons, endeavouring hereby to bring all men to Christ, by a lively faith, (not to the Angels, and Legall Ceremonies, as the false Apostles did) that so they might be made perfect in him. *Dock. 1.* As the main subject of Ministers preaching ought to be Jesus Christ; so, the reprovng of sin, exhortation to duty, instruction in knowledge, is no wayes inconsistent, but agreeth well with the preaching of Christ: for, *Pauls* preaching

did run upon both those; *whom*, saith he, to wit; Christ, *we preach, warning and teaching.* 2. Ministers in their reproofs and pressing of duties, would beware of drawing people off Christ, to seek a righteousness in themselves; but would thereby labour to drive them to Christ for righteousness, to cover the guilt of the sin reprov'd, *Rom. 10. 4.* and for furniture to inable them to go about the duty which is pressed, *Rom. 13. 14.* that so while they warn and exhort, they may be still preaching Christ; thus did *Paul*, *whom*, to wit, Christ, *we preach, warning and teaching every man.* 3. The understanding of man by nature is dark and wholly blind in the things of God; else there were no need of *teaching*; and his will and affections are most perverse and backward; else there were no need of *warning*; *warning every man, and teaching.* 4. The great part of a Minister's work lyeth in thole two, to inform the understanding by *teaching*, and to rectifie the will and affections by admonition, rebuke and consolation, which here goeth under the name of *warning*; and these duties are to be discharged by a Minister unto all within his charge, without respect of persons; *warning every man, and teaching every man.* 5. As it is the duty of a Minister to conceal nothing of saving truth revealed in Scripture: so, all saving truth, and especially the doctrine of Jesus Christ revealed in the Gospel, containeth in it much wisdom, yea all wisdom, so that any other wisdom without this, is nothing else but meer folly; for, this makes men wise unto salvation, *2 Tim, 3. 15.* So he *taught every man in all wisdom*, that is, in the doctrine of the Gospel. 6. The publick Ministry is God's ordinary mean for the reducing of straying and wandering sinners, to Jesus Christ; that being clothed with his righteousness, and renewed by his holy Spirit, they may be made perfect in him and presented so in the last day; *that we may present every man perfect in Jesus Christ.* 7. It ought to be the great end which all Ministers should aim at, to get all of those who are committed to their charge (as being ignorant of

of God's secret decree concerning any of them. 1 Tim. 2. 19) so brought to Christ, that every man may be presented perfect in him: this was Paul's aim.

Verf. 29. *Wherunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.*

He further commends his Ministry, First, from his great pains taken for bringing about the end of it aforementioned, by *labouring* and *striving*; the first word expresseth his great labour in doing, by travelling through so many Nations, preaching so frequently, disputing so accurately with the adversaries of truth, 1 Cor. 15. 10. The second expresseth his patience under many hazards and sufferings, 2 Cor. 11. 23. Secondly, from the most effectuell help, whereby God did assist him, and blesse his Ministry with successe wherever he came. Doct. 1. The gaining of souls to Christ, is a work which cannot be effectuated without great labour and pains; yea, and great wrestling and strife, what with mens corruptions and humours, 2 Theff. 3. 2. what with manifold discouragements arising from within a man's self, 1 Cor. 7. 5. and what with multitudes of crosses and sufferings, which Satan's malice doth usually procure unto a faithfull Minister, 1 Theff. 2. 18. So that whosoever proponeth ease, pleasures, riches and honour unto himself in the Ministeriall Calling; if so he be faithfull, he'll meet with disappointment: he must resolve to labour in the Word, and under crosses for the Word; Paul found it so; *wherunto*, that is, that he might present souls unto Christ *I also labour*, (the word signifieth, to labour unto wearinesse) *striving*. 2. All the labour and striving of Ministers will not prevaile to the gaining of souls; without divine assistance, and Christ's effectuell working with their labours; *striving according to his working*, saith he. 3. When Ministers meet with any successe in their Ministry, they are not to be puffed up with it, or ascribe the praise to their own diligence, piety or parts,

1 Cor. 15. 10. but are to acknowledge thankfully Gods helping hand in it; So doth Paul, *his working, which worketh in me mightily.* 4. The many hardships and sufferings, or extraordinary pains and labour which attend the Ministeriall Calling; ought not to deterre any from it, who is otherwayes fitted and called; because there is divine help, corroborating strength, and answerable furniture allowed unto, and will be forth-coming for those who are imployed in it; so did Paul finde in his own experience: *his working, which worketh in me mightily,* saith he.

CHAP. II.

IN the first part of this Chapter, the Apostle maketh way for the refutation of some errors, by an insinuating Preface; wherein he sheweth, what a conflict he had for them, v. 1. that they might be comforted, united, and grow in the knowledge of Christ, v. 2. whose fulnesse is held forth, v. 3. and that they might be guarded against seducers, v. 4. And because of his affection unto them, v. 5. He exhorts them therefore to adhere to the doctrine received, v. 6. prescribing some helps for constancie, v. 7.

In the second part, he refuteth some contrary errors, reducing them to three heads, abused Philosophie, superstitious rites, and Mosaicall ceremonies, v. 8. which he refuteth joynly, from the fulnesse which is in Christ, v. 9. and our being compleat in him, v. 10. He refuteth the necessitie of Circumcision in speciall, because in Christ, we have the thing signified by it, v. 11. and an externall seal, to wit, Baptisme in the place of it, v. 12. Christ had renewed them without it, v. 13. and abrogated the whole ceremoniall Law by his death, v. 14. yea, and triumphed over all their spirituall enemies, v. 15.

He concludes therefore against their subjecting of themselves to that yoke, v. 16. because Christ, the substance of those shadows, was come, v. 17. He argueth against the second head, to wit, worshipping of Angels, from the ignorance, and pride of those who pressed it, v. 18. and their impairing the honour of Christ, as Head, v. 19. He argueth against the superstitious rites, giving some instances of them; because they were freed from the Mosaicall rites, v. 20, 21. and they thereby placed Religion in things perishing, without any authority, except humane, v. 22. and taketh off some fair pretexts, whereby their Patrons did defend them, v. 23.

Verf. 1. *For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh.*

THe Apostle, being to refute some errors contrary to the former doctrine, maketh way for his work; and yet again insinuateth upon their affections, by letting them know, that he was no lesse solicitous in all his actions and sufferings, that they, their neighbouring Church at Laodicea (to whom he willeth this Epistle to be read, chap. 4. v. 16.) and all other Churches, whom he had never seen in the face, might be established in the truth, than he was for those, among whom he had frequently conversed. *Dott. 1.* When a people doth once incline to error, so ready are they to mistake those who would labour to reclaim or establish them, (*Gal. 4. 16*) that a Minister would use more than ordinary diligence to insinuate upon their affections, and guide dexterously against mistakes and prejudices, when he is to meddle with any thing of that kinde: So the Apostle, beside his generall preface to the whole Epistle, useth here a particular one, when he is to refute some errors, wherewith this Church was most infested.

3. *Though the men of this world be little solicitous for those,*

those with whom they have not particular acquaintance, *Matth. 5. 45.* and Christians are sometimes too apt to mis-judge those who are dear unto God, according to this rule; yet so many are the eyes among the Members of Christ, (*1 Cor. 10. 17.*) that, as it is the duty of every one to promote the good of others (even though they had never seen them) so there are some who do make conscience of this duty; for, the Apostle supposeth, that those Colossians were apt to judge of him, as minding their case little, however he minded the case of others, chap. 1. v. 29. and therefore he sheweth his solicitous care for them also; and this, that the mistake might be removed; as is imported by the causall particle *for*, which knitteth this purpose with the former; *for I would that ye knew.* 3. As faithfull Ministers will necessarily have a fighting life, and many sore conflicts both in body and spirit: so, to make it known unto the people, what sore travell they endure of this kind, if it be not out of ostentation and desire of applause, (*2 Cor. 10. 18.*) is lawful and profitable: for, hereby people are made to bear burden with their Minister, excited to minding their own salvation the more, (the care whereof lyeth so heavie upon their Pastors) and disposed for the more ready receiving of the word from their mouth: So *Paul, I would ye knew what great conflict I have for you.* 4. Ministers in speaking of their affection towards people, and of their pains flowing from it, and Christians also in making known their respects one to another, should beware of flattering those to whom they make their respects and affections known, and would guard carefully against the very suspicion thereof: So *Paul*, lest he should incur any such suspicion, joyneeth not onely those of Laodicea, but also all other Churches, as partaking equally of his Apostolick care; and for them at Laodicea, and as many as have not seen my face.

Verſ. 2. *That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the myſterie of God, and of the Father, and of Chriſt.*

He giveth reaſons of his great conflict for their confirmation in the Truth; and why he made them know ſo much; hereby they ſhould reap much ſolid comfort, their hearts ſhould be inſeperably knit together in love, and attain to a large meaſure of rooted and experimentall knowledge of the myſterie of the Goſpel. Doct. 1. All men are naturally deſtitute of ſolid comfort, and even the People of God, when driven to extremities, (chiefly when the truth of the Goſpel, from which they did draw their conſolation, is queſtioned) do finde their comfort much brangled: *That their hearts might be comforted*, ſaith he: So, for the time their comfort was ſhaken, the truth of the Goſpel being by thoſe Maſters of error queſtioned. 2. It is only the doctrine of the Goſpel which ſedeth a diſconſolate and afflicted ſpirit moſt: and to have that doctrine confirmed, when erring ſpirits would call it in queſtion; and to know alſo that others, dear to God, ſympathize with us in our ſtrait; contributeth much to our eſtabliſhment and comfort: ſo the Apoſtle's care and pains to have them eſtabliſhed in the truth of the Goſpel, which was then queſtioned, and the manifeſtation thereof to them, did contribute for their comfort: *That their hearts might be comforted.* 3. Unity of heart and affections in the Church, is ſo neceſſary, that the want of it doth obſtruct much that ſolid comfort, which might otherwayes be reaped by the Goſpel: for, he ſpendeth their comfort, upon their being *knit together in love*, as a piece of timber joyned by a Carpenter; for, ſo the word ſignifieth. 4. Unity of heart and affections, dependeth much upon union of judgments and conſtancy in Truth: where there is diſcord in the underſtanding about main and ſubſtantial Truths, there can be no through

through and lasting concord of the will and affections: for, he makes *their being knit together in love*, one fruit of their constancy in Truth, for procuring whereof his conflict was. 5. Christians are not to rest contented with the knowledge of common and easie principles of Christianity, (*Heb. 6. 1.*) but are to grow in the knowledge of other more difficult truths; such as relate to various cases, and the defence of Truth against Adversaries; and growth in these, doth follow upon perseverance in Truth: for, such a growth is meant by the *riches of understanding* here spoken of, as another fruit of constancy in Truth. 6. Neither are they to rest upon a fluctuating, doubting knowledge, but to endeavour a full persuasion and assurance, both of the truth of the Gospel in general, and of their own particular interest in the promises thereof: and this also is attained by stability in the Truth: for, it is the *full assurance of understanding* here spoken of, as another fruit of constancy. 7. Neither are they to rest upon simple knowledge of Gospel-truths, (*Matth. 7. 21.*) but are to know them with affection and love to them; they are to take a proof of the truth which is in them, and so from experience to know them: this much is imported in the word rendered *acknowledge*, signifying to know again, and with knowledge above ordinary. 8. As God is the author of the Gospel, his eternal wisdom having found it out, *Eph. 3. 10.* and as Christ was the Fathers Ambassadors to preach and reveal it, *Matth. 12. 18.* So God, and the Father, and Christ are the prime object of the Gospel: the unity of the Godhead, and distinction and order of the persons, the incarnation of Christ, his person, natures, and offices, his saving benefits, and love to sinners (which are all in themselves dark and mysterious) being plainly revealed therein; hence the Gospel is called *the mystrie of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.*

Verf. 3. *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

The words are read by some as relating to the Gospel, in which is contained the knowledge of all things necessary to salvation, both of those which are only to be known and believed, and of those which are also to be practised: but they are taken more commonly as relating to Christ, in whom, as in a house of store, is laid up all saving knowledge, to be imparted unto those who labour to know him. Both senses come to one, Christ being the main object of the Gospel, and both tend to the same scope, which is to hold forth a sufficiency in Christ and the Gospel, in order to the salvation of sinners, without the help of Angels, or vain traditions; the necessity of whose help was urged by the false Apostles. *Dock. 1.* There is in Christ and the Gospel, sufficiency of knowledge in all things necessary to salvation; Christ being the very way to life, *Job. 14. 6.* and the Gospel that doctrine, which holdeth forth this way compleatly, *Job. 20. 31.* Christ having also received the habits of all created knowledge, as of all other graces without measure; that thereby he might be fitted as Mediator, to bestow the grace of saving knowledge upon all the Elect in a competent measure, *Job. 1. 16. In whom are all the treasures.* 2. The knowledge of Jesus Christ is a thing most precious, and most enriching of those who have it: hence is it called *treasures.* 3. Notwithstanding of all that is revealed of Jesus Christ; yet his worth is unsearchable; the most able of created understandings cannot reach the depth thereof; so, *in whom are hid all the treasures.* 4. This fulness of knowledge ascribed to Christ, maketh nothing for the Ubiquitarian error, as if Divine omniscience were inherent in the humane nature; for, though it should be granted, that by these treasures were meant Divine omniscience; yet he saith not *in which humane nature*, but *in whom*, that is, in his person (to wit, according to the Divine Nature) *are hid all the treasures.*

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Verſ. 4. *And this I ſay, leſt any man ſhould beguile you with enticing words.*

He gives a further reaſon of his ſo great care to eſta-
bliſh them in the Truth. or of his mentioning that ful-
neſſe of knowledge, which is in Chriſt and the Goſpel ;
that hereby they might be guarded againſt all Seducers,
who intended to draw them from Chriſt and the ſimpli-
city of the Goſpel; whether by falſe arguments, or inſua-
sing perſwaſions. Doct. 1. As Satan doth endeavour
to ſow the ſeed of Error, where-ever the Goſpel is prea-
ched ; ſo Miniſters ſhould guard people as well againſt
error in opinion, as againſt prophanity of life ; the one
being damnable as the other, 2 Pet. 2.1. Thus doth Paul
here, *This I ſay, leſt any man beguile you.* 2. Miniſters ſhould
labour to inſtruct their people well in the poſitive
grounds of Chriſtian Truths, eſpecially in the know-
ledge of Chriſt and that fulneſſe of ſufficiency which is
in him, as a moſt ſovereign antidote againſt all thoſe
Errors which tend to draw the mindes of people from
him : And whoſoever would meddle with the ſtudy of
controverted truths without hazard and to any good
purpoſe, ought firſt to drink in the knowledge of thoſe
poſitive grounds: for, the Apoſtle proceedeth in this me-
thod, firſt, inſtructing them in thoſe ; and next, dehor-
ting them from contrary errors: *and this I ſay, leſt any man
ſhould beguile you.* 2. As Satan laboureth to engage ableſt
wits in the way of errors ; ſo, when ſuch are engaged
they ſpare no pains for ſeducing of others, abuſing their
parts and gifts, otherwiſe profitable for that end, to wit,
that they may blind the underſtandings of people by ſo-
phiſtical arguments, which conclude not what they ſeem
to hold forth, and lead captive their affections by deceit-
full and inſinuating perſwaſions ; ſo, thoſe Seducers
againſt whom the Apoſtle doth here guard, were men
endued with logick and eloquence: both which they abuſ-
ed, for ſeducing the people ; the firſt by uſing falſe argu-
ments,

ment, lest any man deceive you; the word signifieth, to deceive by not-concluding arguments; The second, by using subtile perswasions, called here, *insisting words*.

Verf. 5. *For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastnesse of your faith in Christ:*

He giveth another reason of his solicitous care for them, to wit, the inward affection which he carried to them: hereby also he anticipateth an objection, how he who lived at such a distance, and was unacquaint, could take upon him to prescribe unto them; and sheweth, though he was absent from them in body, yet he was present with them in spirit, both by his affectionate minding of them; and, as it seemeth by the knowledge which he had of their affairs, through extraordinary revelation, see 2 Kings 5. 26. and while he commendeth the present appearance of Gods grace in them, he doth indirectly exhort them to hold on and persevere. *Dock. 1.* It is not alwayes given unto Gods children, to enjoy the bodily presence of those who might be profitable unto them; for, *though I be absent in the flesh.* 2. But there is a spirituall presence, which may and ought to be intertained in case of bodily absence, which consisteth in mutuall minding of the case of others, (2 Cor. 7. 3.) in being suitably affected with their case, whether it be good or bad, (Heb. 13. 3.) in praying to God for, and by all lawfull means procuring the good of others, chap. 4. 12, 13. and especially Ministers should never be totally absent from their flocks; but, as Paul, *being absent in the flesh*, ought to be thus *present with them in the spirit*, and be suitably affected with their case, as he was; *joying and beholding their order.* 3. Where the lives of Professours within a Church are orderly and pious; where the order of Church-Government is in vigour and flourishing; where there is unity in a Church, every one keeping his station, and helping others in their station, as a well-

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ordered Army with banners: as each of those doth contribute to the rest; so, all of them concurring, makes the Church a joyfull object to beholders: for, *Paul did joy beholding their order*, to wit, in holy walking (*2 Thess. 3. 6.*) in exercise of discipline, (*Ti. 1. 5.*) and in their unite on-going, *Cor. 6. 10.* 4 Where the order of Church-Government chiefly, is in vigour, it contributeth much for keeping Professours steadfast in their assenting unto, and avowing of the doctrine of faith: *Christ's Discipline*, is a strong hedge to defend his doctrine: so, *beholding their order*, he beholdeth also *the steadfastnesse of their faith*.

Verf. 6. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.

He concludeth the Preface, exhorting, that as they had received Christ, to wit, in their judgements, by assenting to the truths which were delivered unto them by *Epaphras* concerning him chap. 1. v. 7. and in their hearts, by esteeming of, adhering to, and believing in him, chap. 1. 4. and in their practice, by setting about those duties which such receipts called for from them, chap. 1. 6. And as in all those, they had taken Christ for their onely Lord and Law-giver, not as a conjunct onely with *Moses* and the Angels: so they would continue constant, and make progresse in all those. *Doct. 1.* *Jesus Christ* is the sum and substance of all saving doctrine, (*1 Cor. 2. 2.*) the marrow of all the promises (*2 Cor. 1. 20.*) the fountain, furniture, and main scope of an holy life, (*Eph. 4. 21, 22.*) so that the receiving of him, is the thing most to be aimed at in all the Ordinances, as that which maketh our knowledge compleat, our faith saving, our obedience acceptable: for, here, the Apostle's pointing at their practice in all those, giveth this as the compend of all, *as ye have received Christ*. 2. It is not sufficient that Christ be once received in our understanding, affection and practice; but there must be continuance and pro-

progress made in receiving of him; for, the word *walk* importeth thus much; *so walk*. 3. The example of progenitours, and our own former practice, layeth on a strong eye to continue constant in our profession and practice if it be a profession of truth, and practice of duty: for, the Apostle argueth from their own former practice, *as ye have received, so walk*. 4. No custome, though never so ancient, no example of progenitours, or former practice of our own, ought to make us continue in any practice, which is finall; or doctrine, which is false and erroneous: for, he exhorteth them to continue in this doctrine, not simply, from the receiving of it; but because they had received *Christ abiding* in it, and so it was true and orthodox doctrine. 4. As the life of a Christian ought to be in a perpetuall motion from sin to holinesse, from the World to Heaven; so, Christ is the way, through which he must move; for, he commands *walk in him*; he must be in him by faith; and so reconciled, *Rom. 8. 1.* the truth of Christ must be the rule of his walking, *Eph. 4. 21, 22.* and he must walk by vertue of influence which cometh from him, *Phil. 4. 13.*

Ver. 7. Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

He prescribeth some means for attaining to constancie and progress. First, stability of faith in adhering firmly to Christ, and that truth wherein they were taught. Secondly, abounding in this grace. Thirdly, thanksgiving for the same. The first graine which ariseth from the scope, is already marked, *chap. 1. v. 23. Doct. 4.* to wit. *Doct. 1.* The gripe which faith doth lay upon Christ, is like unto that which the tree hath in the ground, and so is most sure: for, though the top of the tree doth shake, yet the root remaineth firm, and its firmnesse is from the solidity of the ground, through which the roots are spread; its fruitfulnessse also is by vertue of sap conveyed from

the ground by the roots; so, the stability of Believers, floweth from Christ, *Joh. 10. 28, 29.* and sap and influence is conveyed from him by faith, for making them fruitful, *Joh. 15. 5.* Thus the firmnesse of their faith is set forth by a Metaphor taken from trees deeply rooted & rooted in him. 3. The bond of faith, whereby Believers are knit to Christ, is like that whereby the edifice is fastened to the foundation; the foundation upholdeth the house, so doth Christ the Believer, *Matth. 16. 18.* The rest of the building is made conform to the foundation; so, the copy of a Believers life is taken from Christ, *Matth. 21. 29.* the stones of the building, by taking band with the foundation, are fastened one to another; so faith taketh band upon Christ, and in him with others who are Christ's, *1 Joh. 1. 7.* for, faith is set forth with relation to Christ by a second Metaphor taken from edifices strongly founded; *built up in him.* 4. There is an innovating humour in people, flowing from itching ears, *2 Tim. 4. 3.* whereby they weary of old truths, and hanker after new-fangled errors; arising from little conscience made to practise according to those truths, *Joh. 7. 17.* This the Apostle guardeth against, by exhorting them so often to continue in the doctrine already received; *as ye have been taught,* saith he. 5. As there should be stability, so there would be growth in faith, even to *abounding therein.* Faith groweth in breadth, by extending our knowledge and assent to more divine truths, *Heb. 6. 1.* it groweth in light, when one degree of faith is made a step unto a further, as faith of dependance unto assurance, *1 Pet. 1. 10.* it groweth in length, when its acts are not interrupted, but constant, *Joh. 13. 15.* and it groweth in depth, when it groweth more rooted and solid; whereof before chap. 1. v. 23. And as this growth even to *abounding in faith*, is necessary to make a man constant in the faith; so it is prescribed for this end; *abounding therein.* 6. Thanksgiving for what we have received of faith already, is an effectuall mean to make us constant, grow and abound therein, which holdeth also in all other graces; *abounding therein with thanksgiving.*

Verf. 8. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy, and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Having ended the Preface, he stateth the controversie, reducing those Impostors, whereof he would have them to beware, lest they should be made a prey of by them, unto three heads. First, Abused philosophy, whereby under pretence of reason (which was indeed but deceiving) several things; and particularly, as it appeareth from ver. 18. the worshipping of Angels was pressed upon them, contrary unto the Word: all which doctrine he rejecteth as vain and deceiving. Secondly, Superstitious and foolish rites, obtruded as parts of divine worship, having no other warrant but custom, antiquity, and the authority of men. Thirdly, Levitical rites, and Mosaical ceremonies, which were earthly and carnal rudiments, or beginnings fitted for the infancie of the Church under the old Testament: all which he rejecteth upon this general reason, they were not according to the doctrine of Christ, and did draw away Christians from him. Doct. 1. Christians are Christ's flock, and the doctrine of the Gospel a sheep-fold, wherein so long as they remain they are safe, and when they depart from it, they fall in the hands of seducing Hereticks, who make a prey of their souls, thirsting after, and rejoycing as much in the drawing of people away from Truth, as Robbers & Thieves do when they carry away the spoil of another mans goods; *lest any man spoil you*; It is a metaphor taken from notorious thieves who carry away the straying cartel. 2. Though Philosophy, as it speaketh the knowledge of truth found out by Natures light, and an accurate way for finding out the same, be not to be rejected, it being in all the parts of it a very usefull help for attaining to the more exact knowledge of religious truths revealed in Scripture: and this same Apostle frequently making use of it in his accurate method, insinuating proems, accurat and syllogistick

argumentations ; and that often from common philosophick principles, *Mat. 17. 28.* yet if Philosophy be taken for the errors of Philosophers, and if those be obtruded for truths ; or, if it presume to reject all religious truths, such as the greatest mysteries of christian Religion, which are not conclusions grounded upon, and flowing from Natures light ; or generally, when it is not kept as subservient to Scripture, but presumeth to lord it over them ; Philosophy so taken, and in those cases, is a very dangerous deceiver in the things of God, and so would be eschewed ; for, the Apostle doth not simply condemn Philosophy, but the abuse of it, even that which is deceiving and vain ; *through Philosophy and vain deceit.* 3. The traditions of men, whereby external rites without the authority of the written Word, are obtruded as worship to God upon the Church, having no other warrant but antiquity, custom and humane authority, is the most vain and uselesse doctrine which ever was taught, and no wayes to be submitted unto ; so this *vain deceit is after the traditions of men.* 4. The Mosaical Rites and Legal Ceremonies, as they were prescribed by God unto the ancient Church, to be the first A. B. C, and easie Rudiments of Religion, fitted for the then infant-state of the Church ; so the binding power of them all (Christ the substance being come and suffered) doth cease : yea, the practising of them now, the light of the Gospel having clearly shined forth, is sinfull, and to be eschewed, as speaking really, and by vertue of their first institution, that Christ is not yet come in the flesh, *Gal. 5. 2.* for, by these Rudiments, or, Elements of the world, of which he would have them to beware, is meant those Legal Ceremonies, see *Gal. 4 v. 3, 9.* *After the Rudiments of the world.* 5. The way of Christ, and of men's own natural wisdom, will not weld together so as to make up a perfect mixture : if it be their way, he will not own it for his : for, those false Teachers did not quit Christ wholly, but would have joyned other things with him, and yet the Spirit of God calleth their way a deserting of him ; *And not after Christ,* saith he.

Ver.

Verf. 9. For in him dwelleth all the fulnesse of the God-head
bodily.

He refuteth all those Impostors, first joyntly, because Christ alone is most perfect, and by consequence his doctrine also; as having God fully in his Essence and Attributes inseparably residing in his Person, and this bodily or personally, the Divine Nature, having assumed the humane unto the unity of his Person; for, the word *Bodily*, is often taken for the Person, as 1 Cor. 5. 10. so that it were folly and impiety to seek salvation in any thing, but in Christ, and in the doctrine taught by him. Doct. 1. There is nothing more effectual for making us adhere to Christ and Truth, than the consideration of that worth and fulnesse which is in him; for, the Apostle holdeth out the fulnesse of the Godhead in Christ, that they may not be drawn away from him: *for in him dwelleth, &c.*

2. The more a man doth exercise himself in speaking or thinking of Christ, his heart and mouth will be the more enlarged upon that subject: for, this being the third time which the Apostle hath spoken of this fulnesse, first, chap. 1. v. 19. next, chap. 2. v. 3. and now here, we find his speech riseth still higher. 1. We learn hence several things of the Person and Natures of Christ; as first, that he is true man: for, the Godhead dwelleth in his humane Nature, as in his Temple. Secondly, he is also true God, and so the same God with the Father; for, the fulnesse of the Godhead, not a portion of God only, or the glorious effects of his power, or his particular gifts and graces, but his compleat essence dwelleth in him. Thirdly, That he is a distinct person from the Father, the whole Godhead being incarnat, not as absolutely considered, but as it is in the Person of the Son: for, it is in him, to wit, in Christ, not in the Father, that the Godhead dwelleth bodily. Fourthly, Though there be two Natures in Christ; yet he is but one person: for, the Godhead dwelleth in him bodily, that is, personally, or by vertue of the personal

union. Fifthly, This union is inseperable : for, *the Godhead dwelleth in him*, as in his fixed proper house. Sixthly, Notwithstanding of this union, the two Natures remain distinct, as the inhabitant is distinct from the house wherein he dwelleth. Seventhly, That God doth hold out himself in the Person of Christ God-man, as in a *Nglasse*, to be taken up and transacted with by lost sinners. or, the drift of the purpose is to show that the fulnesse of the Godhead resideth in him, so as that we may make use of that fulnesse throughly for our salvation, and that there is no need of any thing to be added to him.

Verf. 10. And ye are compleat in him, which is the head of all principality and power.

Here are other two arguments : First, Christ is not only full in himself, but all who are in him by faith, are compleat through him, as having from him all things necessary for salvation. The second argument is against the worshipping of Angels in particular, which he refuteth from Christ's prerogative above the Angels, as being their Head and Lord, upholding and ruling them as his creatures, chap. 1. 17. and preserving them in the state of grace through vertue of his mediation, *Joh. 4. 18.* and imploying them for the Churches good, *Heb. 1. 14.* and therefore they are but his servants, and the best of them but our fellow-servants, and therefore ought not to be worshipped, *Rev. 22. 8. 9.* nor are they mediators betwixt God and us, that being an honour due to him only, who is their Head, *1 Tim. 2. 5.* *Doct. 1.* We are in our selves empty things, being destitute of every thing which might commend us to God: *in him we are compleat*, and so in our selves empty. 2. There is a fulnesse in Christ to be communicated unto all, who, being sensible of their own emptinesse, do by faith lay hold upon him; *in whom we are compleat*: which compleateness consisteth in the enjoyment of sufficiency of means for salvation prescribed by him, *Heb. 3. 2.* and in the imputation of his
most

most perfect righteousness, and in the begun renovation of our nature by the Spirit of Christ, 1. Cor. 1. 30. which shall befall upon the growing hand till grace be crowned with glory, Eph. 5. 27. 3. Though there be a compleat fullness in Christ the Mediator from whence we may supply our emptiness; yet we cannot partake of that fullness, except we first be in him, and by faith be united to him: so, in him we are compleat. 4. The greatest powers and most noble of creatures, being compared with Christ, are but in the rank of subjects and servants: *He is the head, even of principalities and powers.* 5. According to the different degree of excellency which is in Christ and the creature, we ought to esteem highly of the one, and meanly of the other: thus *he is the head even of principalities and powers*: The scope whereof is to shew, that he should have the honour which is due to him, and they are to be kept in their own place.

Vers. 11. In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ.

In this verse, and the verses following, he cleareth how we are compleat in him, and reasoneth against the Mosaical Ceremonies, especially Circumcision, upon their observation whereof, they were tyed unto all the rest, Gal. 5. 3. therefore he mainly oppugneth it. The argument is, Believers have in Christ the thing signified by that Ordinance, to wit, spiritual circumcision in the heart, which consisteth in the putting off, by the power of Christs Spirit, that corrupt masse or body of manifold sins flowing from our innate corruption or sinful flesh; so that there was no need of that carnall circumcision by hands, in cutting off the flesh of the foreskin: which is a good consequence against the urgers of circumcision under the new Testament, where these shadows (Christ the substance being come) are abolished, especially seeing they urged it upon this pretence, That the Gentiles could

could not be purified without it. *Doff. 1.* In every Sacrament, such as Circumcision once was, there is an outward sign, which is given by Christs Ministers, and some inward grace signified by it, the author and worker whereof is only Christ himself; So there was the outward rite of Circumcision by the hands of men, and the inward grace of mortification *without hands*; and by the *Circumcision of Christ*, that is, by the inward power of the Spirit of Christ. 2. There is no saving grace enjoyed by Believers but what they have in Christ, to wit, as the fountain, *Joh. 1. 16.* as the procurer and purchaser of all grace for us, *Rom. 6. 6.* and as the applier of his own purchase to us, *Act. 5. 31.* So, *in him we are circumcised.* 3. As our manifold actual sins do flow from the fountain of original corruption, frequently called *flesh*, (*Rom. 7. & 8.*) So the whole bulk of sin is fitly compared to a *body*, because of the weight of guilt which is in it, *Rom. 7. 24.* and the soul is wholly compassed by it, as it is with our natural body, *Gen. 6. 5.* yea, and the whole members of the body are made instruments of it, *Rom. 6. 19.* Thus he saith, *The body of the sins of the flesh.* 4. They who are in Christ, must be about the work of putting off this body, setting against, not only some one sin or other, but the whole masse and body of sin; *putting off the body of the sins of the flesh.* 5. This sinful body is already put off and laid aside in some sense by real Believers, to wit, in its guilt, *Rom. 8. 1.* in its dominion and reign, *Rom. 6. 14.* in the Believers sincere purpose and honest resolution, *2 Cor. 7. 11.* as also in his hope, that one day it shall be put off wholly, *1 Joh. 3. 2.* So the Circumcision which Believers already have in Christ, is designed *4 putting off the body of the sins of the flesh.*

Verf. 12. Buried with him in Baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

He doth further enlarge the former reason, whereby he
also

also pre-occupieth an objection against our compleat-
 nesse in Christ, by shewing we have in Christ, not only
 the thing signified, but also an external initiatory seal,
 to wit, Baptism in the place of Circumcision now abo-
 lished; the fruits of which seal are mortification of sin,
 and vivification in grace, by vertue of the death & resur-
 rection of Jesus Christ, being laid hold on by faith, which
 is wrought in us by the mighty power of God; so that
 there was no place left for Circumcision. *Doct. 1.* The
 Sacrament of Baptism under the new Testament succee-
 deth to Circumcision under the old, and is to be admi-
 nistred to Children born within the visible Church, as
 Circumcision was to Infants of eight dayes age then, *Gen.*
17. 12. for, not only both do seal the same Covenant of
 grace, and are initiatory seals of it, but also *Paul* sheweth
 that the Christian Church is as compleat now in Christ, as
 the Jewish Church was, though we want Circumcision,
 because we have an Ordinance as good as it was, to wit,
 Baptism: Now if Baptism did not belong to Infants, we
 should not yet be so compleat as they were, seeing the
 Covenant was sealed by Circumcision both to themselves
 and their little ones: *Buried with him in Baptism.* 2. Re-
 generation consists of two parts, to wit, first, Mortifica-
 tion of sin, which ought to be a through and constant
 work, here set forth by our *being buried*, which speaketh
 more than death: And secondly, Vivification, or quick-
 ning in grace, set forth by *our rising again.* *Doct. 3.* Both
 those parts of Regeneration are sealed in Baptism, not as
 if we were of necessity to suppose that those are already
 in the person to be baptized, but because Baptism obli-
 geth the baptized person to set about these, and sealeth
 up the whole Promises on Gods part, even those which
 are for sanctification and grace; so that whenever the
 party baptized shall lay hold by faith upon the Promise,
 he hath God engaged by word and seal, to make it out;
 thus Circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith,
Rom. 4. 11. and yet it was not to be supposed that every
 Child of eight dayes age had actual faith: *Buried with*
him

him in Baptism, wherein ye are also risen. 4. Though the Sacraments do seal up grace to us in the way presently mentioned; yet they do not confer grace upon us by any proper vertue of their own, nor yet is there any principle of power in us which can reach the effectuating of such a work, *Eph. 2. 1.* although the Sacraments do strongly tie us to the working of it, as said is: It is only the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, which is the fountain-cause of our dying to sin and living to God, in so far as by the merit, efficacy and example of the former we attain unto the latter; in which respect we are said to be *buried with him, and risen with him.* 5. It is no lesse than the infinit power of God which worketh faith in us, and neither Sacraments, nor the Death or Life of Christ will avail to the subduing of sin, and quickning of grace, except Jesus Christ be laid hold upon by faith: *We are buried with him by faith, and faith is the operation of God.* 6. In our acting of faith in God, we are not to lay hold upon him in a general confused notion, but should eye that in God most, which is most conducing unto that purpose for which we do imploy him: Thus, speaking of faith, as it imployeth God for quickning in grace, he casteth an eye to that work of God, whereupon our quickning in grace dependeth most, even *his raising of Christ from the dead.*

Verf. 13. And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.

He giveth a further reason against the necessity of circumcision, to wit, when they were dead in sin, and without circumcision, as being Gentiles, see *Eph. 2. 11.* God had quickened them with Christ, making them partake of the life of grace, purchased by him here, and giving them right to the life of glory hereafter, having pardoned all their sins freely for his sake. So, there was no necessity, but rather it would be impiety to return unto Cir-

cum-

circumcision now : especially seeing it was urged by the false Apostles, as a necessary mean to get their natures purified, and their sins pardoned. *Dock. 1.* Every man by nature, through sin is in a state of death, he is thereby spiritually dead, as being deprived of all grace, union and communion with God, (chap. I. 21.) he is also judicially dead, as lying under the sentence of death, pronounced by the Covenant of Works, *Gen. 2. 17. And you being dead in your sins.* 2. As this state of death doth totally disable us from quickening our selves, it is onely God who quickeneth : so, no misery of the creature, though never so comprehensive, as extending it self both to our outward and inward state ; though never so desperate, as being past all remedie by humane help, will impede God from doing good, and bestowing of the choicest good. Thus, though they were miserable for their inward state, as *being dead*, and so incurable by humane Art ; and for their outward state, as being in the *uncircumcision of their flesh*, or, uncircumcised Gentiles, yet *God hath quicken them.* 3. Whenever a man believeth in Christ, he is in the same moment of time united to Christ, and so, that all which he did or suffered, as sustaining our person, or which he procured for our behoof, as being our Head, whether in his death, buriall, or resurrection, is imputed to us by God, and a right unto them derived to us, as if we had been personally present with him all those times, and given our consent to his doing of all those things in our name, and for our behalf ; hence is it that He is said to have *quickened these Colossians together with him*, though Christ had risen from the dead, some years before their conversion. 4. There is no spirituall life attainable, except our obligation to wrath by the pardon of sin, be removed : *you hath he quickened, having forgiven you all your trespasses.* 5. This pardon, though dearly purchased by Christ, *Matth. 26. 28.* yet it is freely bestowed upon us ; *having forgiven you*, the word signifies, *freely forgiven*, as coming from a root which signifies grace. 6. Pardon of sin is also universal,

verfall, as leaving no sin unpardoned to him who doth believe and repent, *Psal. 32. 5. having forgiven you all trespasses.*

Verf. 14. Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his crosse:

The Apostle illustrates the benefit of pardon, and bringeth an argument against the Ceremoniall Law in generall, by shewing, God had not onely forgiven the debt of sin, but Christ also by his death, had destroyed their obligation to wrath, because of sin, making it altogether uselesse, ever to give faith in Law against them; which obligation he calleth, *the hand-writing of ordinances which was contrary to us*; alluding to written obligations among men, for sums of money, or such like, wherein there is the body of the Writ, and the Debtors subscription: answerable to which, there is in this *hand-writing*; First, the obligation it self, to wit, the Covenant of works, and condemning power of the Law, *Gal. 3. 10.* Secondly, our assent and subscription to this obligation, which is the sentence of every man's conscience against himself, whether of Jew or Gentile, whereby he assents to the equity of that curse which the Law pronounceth, *Rom. 2. 13.* But particularly, and over and above to the Jews, this subscription was the practice of the Ceremoniall Law, which being separated from Christ and looked upon as service acceptable to God in it self, as it was gone about by many of the Jews before Christ came, and so urged by the false Apostles upon the Gentiles; the practice (I say) of the Ceremoniall Law so considered, was nothing else but a publick testification of their own guilt: for example, by killing a beast was testified, that they deserved to die themselves; and seeing the dispute is in this place against the Ceremoniall Law, this *hand-writing in ordinances*, is to be taken mainly in this sense, although we are not to exclude the

the former : now the argument concludeth strongly, that seeing the debt is payed, the obligation cancelled, it were madnesse and impietie to renew it again, as those did, who practized the Legall ceremonies. *Dott. 1.* There is an obligation above the head of every man, through vertue of the curse of the Law, binding him over to under-ly eternal wrath for sin, assented unto, and as it were subscribed by the voice of every man's conscience, and by the practice of the Ceremoniall Law unto the Jews : for, this is *the hand-writing of ordinances* here spoken of. *2.* This obligation must be cancelled, and so the condemning power of the Law abrogate, before sin be pardoned, and our right to Heaven obtained : for, with respect to the impeding of those, it is said *to have been against us, and contrary unto us.* *3.* None but Christ could destroy this *hand-writing* ; because none other was able to satisfie the sum contained in it. *Heb. 10. 9.* for, he speaks of Christ, while he saith, *blotting out the hand-writing in ordinances.* *4.* It stood Christ no lesse than his life, to get this bond destroyed ; for, he behooved to pay the sum, before the condemning power of the Law could cease, *Job. 3. 16.* and to produce the substance, before those Legall shadows could evanish, *Heb. 9. 12.* both which required his death ; so he is said *to nail it to his crosse.* *5.* It is a matter of no small difficulty, to get the conscience of wakened sinners quieted, and their hearts perswaded, that their obligation to wrath, because of sin, is removed ; therefore the Spirit of God useth so many expressions to assure their heart in this matter ; *the hand-writing is blotted out*, as it were crosse-strokes are drawn through it ; but, lest the heart suspect it may be yet legible, therefore he addeth, it is removed and *taken out of the way* ; but, lest haply it should be again found and produced, he addeth yet, it is torn, destroyed, and *nailed to the crosse*, and so made fully uselesse ever to witnesse any thing against the Believer. *6.* Though Christ did compleat this sum contained within this hand-writing, while he was hanging on the crosse, so as the Father's justice

Justice had no more to seek of Christ the Cautioner, *Joh. 19.30.* in which sense, he did even then meritoriously destroy this hand-writing, yet the obligation standeth still in force against the sinner, till he enter himself Heir by faith unto Christ's obedience and death; for, this was the order agreed upon betwixt the Father and the Son: according to which, the fruits of his death were to be applied, to wit, by faith, *Joh. 3.16.* So, it is clear from Verse 13. those Colossians were dead in their sins before their renovation, which was long after Christ's death.

Vers. 15. And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

He enlargeth the present argument thus, that Christ by destroying that hand-writing, hath spoiled, disgraced, and triumphed over all our spirituall enemies, especially Satan the great Generall, and his whole Army of sins, temptations, death and hell, which fighteth under his banner, and this even by his sufferings: wherein he alludeth to the ancient custome of Conquerors, who did dis-arm their captives, having joyned them by two, or more, in chains, made them march before, to their publick shame and disgrace, they themselves coming after in their triumphing chariot; so did Christ: *having spoiled principalities and powers, made a shew of them, &c.* *Dott. 1.*

The power of Devils is very great, as being spirituall substances, strong and mighty Angels, *Jude v.6.* having the world and sin under them, as their subjects, *Eph. 2.2.* Thus from their power they are called *principalities and powers.* 2. This great power of theirs is wholly employed to oppose the work of man's salvation; for, they are spoken of here as opposits. 3. Satans power over souls, doth flow from the sentence of condemnation pronounced by the Law against sinners, and consists in that dominion which sin hath obtained over them; for, upon the blotting out of that hand-writing, he was spoiled of his power,

power, as appeareth from the connexion. 4. Jesus Christ having satisfied the Fathers justice, and thereby not only enervated the Law's condemnatory sentence, v. 14. but also obtained from the Father, That sin should no more have dominion over the redeemed ones, Rom. 6. 14. he hath spoiled the Devil of that great power which once he had; so that, though he can, and doth tempt Believers, yet he cannot overcome them; though he hold them in exercise, he cannot mar their salvation, 1 Cor. 10. 13. he may bruise their heel, but cannot break their head: Thus with Christ's blotting out the hand-writing, is conjoynd *his having Spoiled Principalities and Powers*. 5. Christ doth bring about his most gracious works in a way which seemeth most unlikely to carnall sense: so that no eye, but that of faith, can take him up: what other eye could take up Christ as doing all this upon the crosse? when the Jews and Roman souldiers were spoiling him, and parting his garments, that he, even then, and by being spoiled, was spoiling principalities and powers; when they were putting him to shame and disgrace, that he, even then, was making a shew of Satan openly, and was rubbing disgrace upon him, overcoming him with his own armour; and when they were triumphing and insulting over him, that even then, he was triumphing over all the Devils in hell, as having by his death given the dead blow to their power and kingdom, and so overcame them, by suffering himself to be overcome by them; *triumphing over them in it*, to wit, in his crosse. 6. How dear soever the work of our salvation did stand to Christ, it was matter of no small joy unto him to have it throughed, and those who were enemies to it destroyed: for, while he is bleeding, and racked with pain upon the crosse, he is yet rejoycing and triumphing, and that because this work was thriving: *he triumphed over them in it*; the crosse was as a chariot of triumph to him.

Verf. 16. *Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath dayes:*

He draweth a conclusion from the former arguments: That seeing the Ceremoniall Law was now abolished, therefore none should take upon them to judge or condemn others for the not observing any of these Ceremonies; or, if any would be so presumptuous, the people of God should not regard their injunctions or censures: and of those ceremoniall observances, he giveth two instances; the one relating to that difference to be kept among Meats, according to Numb. 6. 3. the other relating to that difference observed in Dayes: Dayes observed among the Jews were chiefly of three sorts; First, anniversary, that returned every year, here designed by the generall name of *an holy day*. Secondly, Lunary, or monethly, which returned every moneth, as the first day of every *new moon*. Thirdly, weekly, which returned every week, and on the seventh day of the week: all which are now abrogated, even the Jewish seventh day Sabbath; and the Lord's day, or, the Christian first-dayes Sabbath, substitute in its place, 1 Cor. 16. 2. *Doct. 1.* What ever Christ hath purchased by his death, ought to be stood to, and made use of: for, upon the abolition of the ceremoniall Law by Christ's death, he inferreth, *Let no man therefore judge you.* 2. Christ the Lord hath given no such power unto any, to make that a part of worship, binding the conscience, which he hath not commanded: *Let no man judge you.* It relateth to the false Apostles, that they should not injoyne. 3. When men presume to prescribe laws binding mens conscience, we are not to obey what they injoyne, or regard much what they judge of, or inflict upon us for disobedience: *let no man judge you.* It relateth also to the people that they should not obey such injunctions. 4. There is an abstinence from meats politick, which the Magistrate injoyneth

joyneth for civill ends; there is an abstinence medicinal, which Physicians prescribe for preservation or recovery of health; and an abstinence Ecclesiasticall, when God by his providence, and voice of his Church, calleth his people to fasting and mourning: all those sorts of abstinence are lawfull; but to abstain from meat upon pretence of holinesse and conscience, as if some meats were unclean, or lesse holy in their own nature than others, 1 Tim. 4. 4. or, as if simple abstinence at any time were a thing acceptable to God in it self, without respect had to the end for which it is injoyned, Isa. 58. 5. This is sinfull and unlawfull; *Let no man therefore judge you in meat or drink.* 5. Though the first day of the week is constantly to be sanctified by all the Christian Churches, and that by vertue of a divine command; 1 Cor. 16. 2. Christ's example, Job. 20. 19. and Apostolick practice, Acts 20. 7. and other dayes also, or parts of dayes are to be sanctified, when God, by his more than ordinary judgements or mercies, doth occasionally call to humiliation or thanksgiving, Mark 2. 20. Yet not onely is the keeping of the Jewish set Feasts and Fasts sinfull, but by more than paritie of reason, the setting apart of dayes to the honour of Saints and Angels, the keeping holy of any day not appointed by God, for some supposed sanctitie in that day more than in another; or, as if simple abstinence from work, were in it self acceptable to God, is also unlawfull; Yea, the dedicating of fixed anniversary dayes, whether for humiliation or thanksgiving, so as not to take that day again for worldly employments, if God by his providence did call us to it; or, if by change of dispensation he call us unto an exercise contrary unto that, for which the day is set apart: such dedication of dayes is also unwarrantable, as having no example in the Church of the Old Testament, nor yet from the practice of Christ and his Apostles, and hath in it some kind of limiting of the Almighty, to make the course of his providence to answer our appointed times; *Let none judge you in respect of*

a holy day. 6. Christians in the point of obedience to God, and of not subjecting their consciences to the will of men, ought to be very precise; *In respect of a holy day*; in the Originall it is, *in the part of a holy day*; the false Apostles, it seemeth, urged to sanctifie a part of those dayes at least, if not the whole; but Paul will not have them yeelding, no not to a part.

Verf. 17. *Which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ.*

He strengtheneth the conclusion by an additionall argument, the meaning whereof is: those Legall Ceremonies were but dark shadows of things to come, to remain onely untill Christ, who is the truth, body and substance of them should come; so that to observe them under the Gospel, were in effect to say, that Christ the Body is not yet come. *Dott. 1.* Though some of those Legall Ceremonies were commemorative of things past, *Exod. 13. 8.* yet the main use of them all, was, to lead the Church which then was, to the consideration of things to come, to wit, Christ, grace, and the doctrine of the Gospel: so by the difference of meats was signified, that the Jews were a distinct people from all other Nations, *Acts 10. 11. 23.* which distinction was to be taken away by Christ; their Festivall dayes, as the Pascheover, did shadow forth our spirituall delivery by Christ, *1 Cor. 5. 7.* and the Sabbath, our eternall rest, &c. *which are shadows of things to come.* 2. The knowledge which the ancient Church had of Christ, was but very dark and confused, being compared with ours, such as the designation of a Body by its shadow, they had but *shadows of things to come.* 3. How much vertue must there be in Christ, whose very shadow, some obscure and confused notions of him, did afford abundant life and comfort unto all such as were then saved: for, all that they enjoyed, was but *shadows of things to come.* 4. Whatever good was hid under those Legall shadows, we have it all fulfilled and

and made manifest in Christ and the Gospel: some of them shadowed forth moral sanctity, and this Christ hath clearly taught, and in his own person fulfilled; some pointed at the expiation of sin, and this Christ by his life and death hath merited; some did presignifie eternal life, and the participation of it by real Believers, and this Christ in the Gospel hath clearly unfolded; so the Body is of Christ.

Verf. 18. *Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility, and worshipping of Angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.*

He reasoneth now against the first sort of Impostors, mentioned ver. 8. to wit, abused Philosophy, whereby they did presse the worshipping of Angels, which he dehortheth from, because those Hereticks did usurp the place of Judges, to prescribe in the matter of worship, thereby making Christians lose their reward of Heaven, by departing out of the way which leadeth to it; and because they did cover their heretical spirits, and damnable error of Angel-worship by a shew of humility and arguments drawn from it, and did determine boldly in those things whereof they were wholly ignorant; and because they were puffed up with arrogance and pride, arising from the gifts of their fleshly and corrupt mind. *Dott. 1.* Error and Idolatry, especially in Gods worship, is a fearful sin, depriving those who are bewitched with it of the reward of Heaven and happinesse: for, the pressers of Angel-worship, did *beguile them of their reward.* *2.* Such is the mad zeal of those who are the patrons of Idolatry, as to presse their idolatrous opinions and practices with so much authority upon the consciences of people, as to adjudge them to condemnation if they receive them not; *let no man deceive you of your reward:* the word signifieth *let no man play the Judge over you, defrauding you of your reward,* and is taken from the unjust dealing of Judges and

Umpiers in Races, who would by their authority presse men to run out of the way, as they would not lose the prize, and in the mean time make them lose. 3. It hath been, and yet is very usuall for vilest Hereticks to cover themselves with a more than ordinary shew of humility and self-denial in the whole strain of their carriage; that so they may deceive the simple, *Rom. 16. 18.* Those Hereticks did lurk under *voluntary humility*. 4. The more of self-denial men offering spirits do pretend to, they are the more dangerous, and the more to be eschewed; so did the Apostle enjoin the Colossians to beware of these Hereticks, so much the more as they pretended to a *voluntary humility*. 5. Though a duty, or vertue, were never so good in it self; yet when men do place it in those things, wherein God doth not, it is a sin; for they made worshipping of Angels to be humility, pretending it were presumption to go to God at the nearest, without the mediation of those blessed and glorious creatures: and it was *voluntary*; a humility of their own invention, and therefore God makes it a part of their wickednesse. 6. Though we are to give civil worship to men in place and authority, or who excel in gifts and graces, *Exod. 20. 12.* which ought to be given also to glorified Saints and Angels, in so far as to think reverently of them, to blesse God for his goodnesse to them, and the good which he doth unto us by them, and to long to be in that state of happinesse which they enjoy; yet religious worship, as importing the subjection of our minds and consciences unto that which we worship, belongeth only unto God, *Deut. 6. 13.* and to give it as the Papists do, unto any creature, whether Saint or Angel, is no lesse than grosse Idolatry: for, it is condemned here: *And the worshipping of Angels.* 7. Nothing ought to be received for a part of worship, and much lesse to be pressed by us upon others as such, the consonance whereof with the mind of God is not fully known and thoroughly understood; so they are condemned for pressing those things on others, which they did not understand themselves; *intruding in-*

to those things which they had not seen. 8. It is the nature of Hereticks to be most bold and peremptory in those things whereof they understood least: boldness, confidence and ignorance, are the usual companions of Heresie. Jude 10. So they intruded into those things which they had not seen; it is a word taken from the bold and lofty going of those who acted the persons of Kings in Stage-plays. 9. As pride and self-conceit are the usual attendants of Heresie; so there is often much of pride and self-seeking, where folk pretend to more than ordinary self-denial and humility: Vice is then arrived at the highest degree, when it seeketh to veil it self under the pretence of the contrary vertue, 1/a. 66. 5. So those Hereticks, who pretended much to humility, were puffed up with their fleshly mind. 10. The mind of man is wholly corrupt and fleshly, and cannot but miscarry when it taketh upon it to judge and command in the things of God; according to the principles of natures light; hence he calleth the mind fleshly, or corrupt, with relation to divine worship. 11. There is nothing by which a man will be more readily puffed up than the inward gifts of the mind, if they be not sanctified; such as wit, knowledge, eloquence, memory, &c. hence he maketh their puffing up to flow from the mind; vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.

Verf. 19. And not holding the head, from which all the body by joynts and bands having nourishment ministred, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

Here is another argument against the worshippers of Angels, in that they impare the honour of Christ, as head of his Church; making Angels to share with him in it, while-as they employed them as Mediators with God to obtain grace and salvation, when Christ alone doth discharge the office of an Head compleatly, from whom the whole Body of the universal Church, being knit to him the Head, and one to another by the Nerves

and Sinnews of one common Spirit, doth receive spiritual nourishment and increase in the graces of Gods Spirit. *Doct. 1.* So jealous is Christ in the matter of his own glory, that he will not suffer any other to share with him in it: if Saints, Angels, Pope, or any other be made use of as conjunct colleagues with, and helpers of Christ in his Mediatorial office, he ceaseth to be a Mediator at all unto those who so do; thus will they give but a share of the honour due unto Christ, as Head, to the Angels: they are said *not to hold the head*, or to be separated from the head, and the vertue which floweth from it. 2. What ever relation is taken on by Christ towards his Church, whether of King, Head, Husband, Brother, Friend, or any other, he will be really forth-coming according to all which that relation doth import; So, as Head, he doth all that which the head doth to the natural body: he furnisheth us with life, motion, spiritual nerves, arteries, &c. *from whom the whole body, &c.* 3. That sufficient influence for grace, and spiritual nourishment may be conveyed from Christ the head, to sinners, it is necessary that they be unite and knit to him, to wit, by the Spirit of Christ, *Phil. 3. 12.* and the grace of faith, *Eph. 3. 17.* for, those are the *joynts and bands*, by which this *nourishment is ministred*; he speaks with an allusion to the nerves and arteries of the natural body, whereby it is knit to the head, and hath life and motion conveyed unto it. 4. There is a band of Christian love wrought by the Spirit of God, by which all the members of Christ's mystical body are knit together: for, Love is the band by which they are *knit together*, chap. 3. 14. *Doct. 5.* The more of spiritual influence Believers do draw from Christ, they will band the better among themselves; for, their being knit together by joynts and bands, as the members of the natural body by their respective ligaments, doth depend upon their receiving of nourishment from the head; *from whom the body having nourishment ministred, and knit together.* 6. Growth and increase is required in the members of Christ's body; and an increase,

crease, not in pride and conceit of gifts, but in knowledge, humility, faith, patience, and other graces (2 Pet. 1.5.) which come from God. This is to *increase with the increase of God*, that is, which cometh from God. 7. This Christian increase and divine growth, is attained unto by-keeping strict union with Christ, and communion with his Members: for, their increasing with the increase of God, supponeth *nourishment ministered from the Head*, and themselves knit together by joints and bands.

Verf. 20. *Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world: why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?*

21. *(Touch not, taste not, handle not):*

He reasoneth now against the third sort of Impostors, mentioned v. 8. to wit, ridiculous and superstitious rites and opinions in worship and doctrine. He proponed those Impostors, v. 8. in that order, wherein they did break up first in the world; but in the refutation he altereth the method, meddling with that first which had most of seeming reason for it. His first argument against this head, is to this purpose. That seeing, as he hath already proven, they were freed from the Leviticall Ordinances, (called *rudiments of the world*: see v. 8.) which were instituted by God himself, by what pretext of reason could they submit to superstitious rites, appointed by men? as if they were living in the world, that is, subjected in their consciences to the dictates of men v. 20. Of which ordinances he giveth one instance in the matter of meats, and speaketh in the person of some one of those superstitious Rabbies, discharging the people to *touch*, or rather for eschewing tautologie, and as the word doth also signifie, *to eat a little of such a meat*; then, *to taste it*; lastly, *to handle it*, v. 21. *Doct. 1.* Through vertue of Christ's under-taking to die for believers, and the Father's acceptance of his death for them, it followeth, that all those benefits which were purchased by his death, do as much belong

belong unto them upon their laying hold upon him by faith; as if they themselves had died; Yea, as to this effect they are reckoned to have died with him: thus they were *dead with Christ* to those ceremonies, and so they had no more power over them, than the Laws of men have over those who are dead: because Christ having by his death fulfilled what was typified by them, and so purchased freedome to his people from that yoke, they had as much right to that purchased freedome, as if themselves had died for it; *if ye be therefore dead with Christ, &c.* 2. Our being freed from the tye of the Ceremoniall Law and ordinances thereof, though appointed by God, doth much more liberate us from the yoke of significant rites and religious ceremonies, which are onely instituted by men: he did not abrogate his own Ceremonies, that men might appoint theirs: and as it is sinfull for men to injoyne such; so it is no lesse sinfull, and a very betraying of that liberty which Christ hath purchased, *Gal. 5. 1.* to give obedience to any such injunctions: for, he reasoneth from the abolishing of the ceremoniall Law, to our not-subjecting of our selves to any ordinance of that kind: *if ye be therefore dead, why are ye subject to ordinances?* 3. The authors of superstition are very diligent to have their superstitious fooleries punctually practised, and their commands for that end exactly obeyed. Thus he brings in the Masters of superstition delivering their injunctions, as it were to every man in particular: *touch not*, in the singular number. 4. There is no end of superstitious injunctions; when once given way to: they do both multiply and grow also more strict; so here, first, they forbid them *to eat*; secondly, *to taste*; thirdly, not so much as *to handle*, 5. Satan useth most frequently to lay snares and gins in those things whereof men have most frequent use, especially in our meat and drink: he driveth some to sin in those by-excesse, *Isa. 5. 11.* Others by placing Religion in simple abstinence from them, under pretence of a more than ordinary mortification; So did these Do-

Doctors who commanded, *eat not, taste not, handle not.*

Verf. 22. *Which all are to perish with the using*) after the commandements and doctrines of men.

He addeth two other arguments against those superstitious rites, especially the placing of Religion in abstinence from meats; First, they are appointed for the use of man, and perish in the using, 1 Cor. 6. 13. Secondly, all such ordinances are but traditions of men, *Matth. 15. 9. Doct. 1.* We should use all things for that end for which God hath appointed them: Religion is not to be placed in those things which God hath only destinated for a naturall or civill use, as the wearing of such an habit, abstinence from such and such meats: for, the Apostle reasoneth against the placing of Religion in meats, because they are appointed onely for a naturall use; *which all are to perish with the using.* 2. This doth not militate against the religious use of Bread and Wine in the Sacrament: for, God hath appointed those Elements to be so used: and the two arguments in this verse are to be taken jointly, that no humane authority can injoyne the use of, or abstinence from, such a sort of meat, as a part of religious worship; *which all are to perish with the using, after the doctrines of men.* 3. Though Church-Judicatories have power to determine time, place, and other circumstances of worship, which are common to religious and civill actions, and are left undetermined by the Word, as being almost infinite, and often changeable upon severall occasions, 1 Cor. 14. 40. Yet the Lord hath given no such power unto men, whether the Civill Magistrate, Church guides, or any other, to injoyne any thing as service to God in it self, which he hath not appointed; nor yet to command any thing to be gone about as a religious ceremony, or significant rite in his worship: all such ceremonies were expressly prescribed by God under the Old Testament, so that it was not lawfull to add any

anything unto what was commanded them, *Doct. 12. 32.* and the rule of worship must be no lesse compleat under the New Testament, *Heb. 3. 2.* and 5. 6. So, those rites were to be rejected for this same very cause, they were *the commandments and doctrines of men.*

Verf. 23. Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will-worship and humility, and neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

He mentioneth three fair pretences, whereof use was made to plead for, and commend those superstitious rites; First, they were *will-worship*; a giving of more to God than he required: Secondly, the practising of them, was an evidence of peoples humility, in their submissive obedience to the injunctions of superiours. Thirdly, their voluntary and excessive abstinence from meat, sleep, and their other laborious bodily exercises, did tend to mortification, and was a part of mortification, in *neglecting of the body*, which the most part of men strive so much to pamper: all which the Apostle, having spoken sufficiently to this purpose already, doth refute in one word, to wit, that they had onely a shew or pretext, but no soliditie of reason or wisdom in them; and addeth another reason against the practice of those rites, because thereby they withheld that honor or just care: (see *1. Tim. 5. 3.*) from the body, which ought to be had in the satisfying the necessities thereof. *Doct. 1.* There is no error, the maintainers whereof have not somewhat to say in its defence, whereby they labour to extoll it as most heavenly and excellent; Thus the doctrine of those superstitious rites pretended to *wisdom*, that is, heavenly and excellent doctrine. 2. All that can be said for any error, being rightly weighed, will be found but meer pretexts, fair shews, and no soliditie of reason; *they had but a shew of wisdom.* 3. As men do like well to serve God with their own inventions, thinking they do thereby give unto God his whole due, and somewhat more:

So

So God will acknowledge nothing for service done to him, but what himself hath required; he approveth willing worship, but not *will-worship*; for, it is here rejected, notwithstanding the fair shew of wisdom which is in it. 4. For men to give blinde obedience unto the commands of Superiors, though it pretend to humility and devout submission of mind; yet it is not reall humility, but a prostituting of our souls and consciences to the wills of men; So this *humility* or submissive disposition, which was their second pretence, hath but a *shew of wisdom* in it, and is not reall. 5. Though watchings, fastings, and other bodily exercises are profitable, and may be lawfully used, if they be referred to the right end for bringing the body in subjection, 1 Cor. 4. 37. lest through too much satietie it take loose reins to sin; and that hereby we may be helped to call on God more ardently, Joel 1. 14. providing there be due moderation in using of them, Josh. 7. 10. Yet the excessive and immoderate use of those, disabling the body from being serviceable to the spirit, and the placing of worship in them, being considered in themselves, and without relation to the fore-mentioned ends: The neglecting of the body thus, though it hath a shew of reason for it, yet it hath no more but a shew or pretext, and is a reall sin before God: *which things have a shew of wisdom, neglecting the body.* 5. As there is an excessive pampering of the flesh, which is sinfull, and forbidden, when provision is made for it to fulfill the lusts thereof, Rom. 13. 14. So there is a lawfull and necessary care of the flesh or body, whereby things necessary for food and raiment are provided for and bestowed upon it, in so far, that strength and health be not in-lacking for discharging the duties of our calling; and they who deny this care and honour to it, though even upon a religious pretence, do sin against God; so he condemneth those superstitious rites in this, that many of them did carry with them the neglect of this care; *not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.*

C H A P. I I I.

THe Apostle (having asserted the truth of the Gospel, and refuted some contrary errors) exhorteth them next unto suitable practice. And in the first part of this Chapter, he presseth upon them generall duties belonging to all conditions of men.

And first, he exhorteth unto all those duties, in the bulk, under the name of seeking Heaven, and things heavenly, and of neglecting things on earth. First, because of Christ's being there in great state, v. 1, 2. And secondly, because they were dead to sin, and things under Heaven. And thirdly, though their spirituall life was now hid, v. 3. yet it should kyth afterwards, v. 4. Next he presseth those generall duties in two particular branches; as first, mortification, reckoning forth severall sins to be mortified; first, more carnall corruptions, v. 5. and arguments are used, v. 6, 7. Secondly, more spirituall corruptions, v. 8, 9. — by an argument taken from their regeneration, v. — 9, 10. Which he cleareth by removing those things which have no influence upon regeneration, v. 11. Next he presseth vivification, and the exercise of severall vertues; whereof he giveth some examples, intermingling diverse arguments, to v. 16. where he inciteth to the study of Scripture, and giveth a generall rule for all our actions, v. 17.

In the second part, he presseth some duties belonging to Christians, as they are members of Families: First, the duties of wives, v. 18. Secondly, of husbands, v. 19. Thirdly, of children, v. 20. Fourthly, of fathers, v. 21. Fifthly, of servants, v. 22, 23, which are enforced by a promise, v. 24. and a threatening, v. 25.

Verf. 1. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God,

2. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth,

He exhorteth from the ground (held forth chap. 2. v. 12.) of their being risen with Christ, that they would earnestly seek, know, and from knowledge, delight in things which are above; to wit, Heaven, happinesse, and all spirituall graces; and not in things earthly, such as riches, honors, pleasures, together with those superstitious rites placed in things earthly and perishing, whereof he spoke before; and that because Christ their Head, their Husband, is above, at the right hand of God, compleatly glorified, and intrusted with full power to dispense all things for his peoples good, *Eph. 1. v. 20, 22.* Doct. 1. Our serious minding of the main and substantiall duties of pietie and righteousness, would serve to divert exceedingly from unnecessary debates about, and practizing of superstitious rites and ceremonies in divine worship: for, the Apostle (having reasoned against those chap. 2.) subjoyneth this exhortation, to *set their affections on things which are above*, as a most excellent diversion from them. 2. The doctrine of salvation and free grace, is then rightly learned, when the fruits of an holy life do flow from the knowledge of it; otherwayes, the grace of God is turned into wantonnesse, *Jude v. 4.* So Paul (having given a short sum of saving doctrine) exciteth to holinesse of life, as the most fitable fruits of such doctrine: *seek the things which are above, &c.* 3. As Heaven and glory: so the saving graces of God's Spirit are *things above*; as coming from above, *James 3. 17.* and elevating the heart of him who hath them, above things earthly, to entertain communion with God here, that he may live above with God for ever, *Phil. 3. 20, 21.* Thus they are said to be above;

above; *seek the things which are above.* 4. Heaven, and saving graces which lead to it, are to be sought, and diligently sought: *seek the things which are above.* The word signifieth a diligent search, and is applyed to those who are vehemently desirous to have that which they seek, *1. Pet. 5. 8. Mark 12. 12.* 5. That Heaven and things heavenly may be thus sought diligently, we must know somewhat of the worth which is in them, and from knowledge put a price upon them: *Set your affection on things above.* The word rendered *affection* here, in the Originall comprehendeth the operations of the understanding, will, and affections: So it is to know them, from knowledge to affect them, and so to seek them, 6. Things earthly, and things heavenly, are in two contrary ballances; so that the more of the heart is given to the one, the other getteth the lesse: for, he opposeth those two, *Set your affection on things above, not on things on earth.* 7. Though we may use the world, and things worldly, yea, and seek them moderately, that so we may have the use of them, *1 Tim. 5. 8.* yet they are to be sought in subordination, and not in opposition to things heavenly: They must not be sought as our last end and furthest shote, *Psal. 49. 11.* not by unlawfull means, *Eph. 4. 23.* or, with neglect of God's worship, *Matth. 6. 33.* not so, but to reverence and submit to God, when he crosseth and disappointeth us in them, *Job 1. 21.* for, in this sense he commands, *Set your affection on things above, not on things on earth.* 8. Not onely are reall Believers risen with Christ; First, judicially, Christ's resurrection (as all his other actions, wherein he sustained our person) being imputed to us, so, as to obtain what was purchased by them: See chap. 2. v. 20. *doct. 1.* And secondly, in their own persons, all Believers being really and personally quickened and raised from the death of sin, to newnesse of life, by vertue of Christ's resurrection, *Rom. 6. 4.* as that, whereby he evidenced his purchasing of holiness for them, by his death, which he doth afterward bestow upon them. But besides, all the Members of the visible Church

Church are in some sense risen with him, in so far as they are actually tyed by their professing and interest in him, 1. *Job. 2. 6.* and by the Covenant sealed in their Baptism, *Rom. 6. 2, 3.* to make use of the vertue purchased by his resurrection, for raising of them up from the death of sin, to the life of grace, for, he supponeth they are risen with Christ: *If ye be therefore risen with Christ.* 9. From this it followeth, that all within the visible Church, whether regenerate, or unregenerate, are to make use of this consideration of their being raised with Christ, as a strong argument to make them seek after Heaven, and endeavor holiness of life: the latter sort being ingaged to make use of the power of his resurrection for this end, & having Heaven and holiness purchased for them, if they will but by faith flee unto him: the former sort having an actual right unto those things already, as being judicially risen with him, and the begun life of holiness bestowed upon them, by vertue of his resurrection, and more of that vertue, for compleating of what remaineth, in readinesse to be communicated unto them, if they will but imploy it by faith: for, from this ground he inforceth holiness; *If ye be therefore risen with Christ, seek those things, &c.* 10. Jesus Christ in his Humane Nature is now in Heaven, and not upon earth; else the Apostles argument would not hold, *to seek things which are above*, because *he is there.* 11. The love which Christians do bear unto Christ, ought to be such, that the very place where he is, ought to be lovely for his sake: their affections being wholly set upon it, and upon those things which are in it, and flow from it, or tend towards it: for, so he reasoneth, *Set your affection on things above, where Christ is.* 12. The great glory which Christ our Head enjoyeth in Heaven, together with the power and authority put upon him for the Churches good, especially for bestowing of grace and glory, *Acts 5. 3.* is a strong encouragement to make the Members of the Church, and chiefly reall Believers, set about the study of holiness: for, this glory and power of his, is signified by his sitting

at the right hand of God, *Eph. 1. 20, 21, 22, 23.* and from this he reasoneth, that they should seek those things which are above, whereby he compriseth all those duties wherein holinesse consists, even from this, *that Christ is sitting there at the right hand of God.*

Verf. 3. For ye are dead, and your life is hid wth Christ in God.

4. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

He giveth further reasons to inforce the exhortation ; First, they were spirituallly dead to sin, and by consequence to those earthly things, so, as not to place their happines in them, or to be sinfully eager in seeking after them. 2. Though their spirituall life, whereof they were partakers by their rising with Christ, was for the time hid under crosses and infirmities ; yet it was surely kept for them by God in Christ, *v. 3.* and should hereafter gloriously appear in Christ's second coming, *v. 4.* *Doff. 1.* Reall Believers are spirituallly dead, not in sin, *Eph. 2. 1.* but to sin, *Rom. 6. 11.* the dominion and reign of sin being shaken off, *Rom. 6. 14.* and its strength much weakened by the power of grace, *Gal. 5. 17.* though not totally subdued, *Rom. 7. 18.* and Christ having undertaken to subdue it wholly in them, *Eph. 5. 27.* And all the members of the Church (though not as yet real Believers) have ingaged themselves to imploy the strength of Jesus Christ for the subduing of sin ; whence in some sense, to wit, *judicially* by obligation, they may also be said to be dead : for, the Apostle supponeth of all of them, every one in his own way, that they were thus dead : *for ye are dead,* saith he. 2. The consideration of this, that we are thus dead to sin, is a strong argument for the not-inflaving of our affections to things earthly : for, that would argue sin to be yet reigning, and were an adding of fuell to sin, for keeping of it alive, after we have under-taken to be its death : It's used as an argu-

ment here to that purpose: *for ye are dead.* 3. The spirituall life of grace here, and of glory hereafter, is a life desirable, and onely worthy of the name of life, our naturall life being but short, uncertain, and common to us with devils, reprobates, yea and with beasts; and so unworthy to be called *life*, being compared with this, *1 Tim. 5. 6. Our life is hid*, saith he, speaking of this spirituall life, as if there had been no other life but it. 4. This spirituall life, though really enjoyed by Believers, as having grace in possession, *1 Pet. 1. 4.* and a right to future glory, *Job. 3. 16.* yet it is hid: the crosse which accompanieth godlinesse *Act. 14. - 22.* together with the many out-breakings and infirmities of the godly, *Gal. 6. 1.* and the nature of this life, which consisteth in things spirituall, as adoption, justification &c. *Gal. 2. 20.* those things make this life not at all discernable by the wicked, *1 Cor. 2. 14.* yea, and hardly by the regenerate man himself, who is carryed much to judge of things according to sense, *Pf. 73. 13, 14.* So *our life is hid.* 5. Though this life be hid, yet it is surely kept, being hid with Christ in God, as out of the knowledge, so out of the hazard of the world: God the fountain of all grace and glory, having given all the fulnesse thereof unto Christ the Mediator, *Job. 3. 35.* from which fulnesse he is to bestow so much as is fitting for our condition here, *Act. 5. 31.* reserving the rest to be forth-coming for us in glory hereafter, *1 Job. 3. 2. It is hid with Christ in God.* 6. So near is that union which is betwixt Christ and Believers, that he is their life: His life and theirs are in a kind one *Gal. 2. 20.* he having purchased this life for us, *1 Job. 4. 9.* and possessing the fulnesse of it in himself, *Job. 14. 6.* that he may communicate it unto them, *Job. 5. 40.* and having communicated the first principles and seeds of it already, *Rom. 6. 11.* besides that, he is the object of this life, their happinesse and life consisting in their knowing and injoying of him, *Job. 17. 3.* for, *when Christ who is our life*, saith he. 7. As Christ now in his bodily presence is removed from us: so he is again to appear, when he shall

come the second time unexpectedly, 1 *Thess.* 5. 2. and with great glory, accompanied with Angels, and flames of fire, 2 *Thess.* 1. 8. to judge the quick and the dead, 2 *Tim.* 4. 1. *when Christ shall appear.* 8. There is a state of glory, both in soul (1 *Cor.* 13. 12.) and body (*Phil.* 3. 21.) waiting for the people of God: *then shall ye also appear with him in glory.* 9. This glory of theirs is to be suspended untill Christ's second coming: There will be alwayes somewhat in-lacking till then; but then their glory shall be compleat, which should make us long for it. *Phil.* 3. 20. *Then shall ye also appear with him in glory.* 10. The faith of approaching glory at Christs second coming, is a strong argument to make us wean our affections from things earthly, and endeavor earnestly the study of a holy life: an Heir of a Kingdom will not be much taken with petty pleasures, his minde is so carryed up to higher things: for, *Paul* presseth them to set their affections on things which are above, because, saith he, *ye shall also appear with him in glory.*

Verf. 5. Mortifie therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleannesse, inordinate affection, evill concupiscence, and covetousnesse, which is idolatry:

He proponeth the former exhortation more particularly, by branching out the Christian mans task in two; First, mortification of sin; and presseth them to mortifie or put to death their members, not of their naturall body, for, that were a sin against the sixth Command, but of the masse of corruption, or body of death, which was in them, to wit, their corrupt lusts and affections, which are said to be *upon the earth*, because they draw the soul down towards earth: whereof he mentioneth some, which are carnall and fleshly, as tending to fulfill our unlawfull pleasures; *fornication, uncleannesse, &c.* *Doct. 1.* The work of mortification, whereby a sinner sensible of the evill of sin, (*Act.* 2. 37, 38.) doth honestly resolve, (*Job*

34. v. 31.) and accordingly endeavor, (2 Cor. 7. 11.) to subdue sin throughly, root and branch, or to put it to death; and this not onely one sin, but all known sins, *Hos. 14. 2.* eschewing carefully the occasions of sin, *Job 31. 1.* and using all means which may tend to the subduing of it; such as prayer, (2 Cor. 12. 8.) hearing of the Word, (1 Pet. 2. 1, 2.) yea, and in some cases, fasting, *Mark 9. 29.* But chiefly, acting faith in Christ for strength, *Phil. 4. 13.* This is a work so necessary, that the life of glory to be manifested at Christ's second coming, cannot be attained without it: for, from what he said, v. 4. of their appearing with Christ in glory, he inferreth, *Mortifie therefore, &c.* 2. This work of mortification is not perfected at an instant: So much of this body of death remaineth still in life, that the best of Christians must make it their daily task, to mortifie their members, though they be already mortified in part: for, v. 2. they were dead, and yet he commands here, *Mortifie your members.* 3. Scripture commands for mortifying of sin, do not evince a power in men unrenewed, to obey what is commanded; if we consider that such commands are given, even to those who are already renewed, and are hereby injoynd to carry on the begun work of Mortification towards some perfection, from a principle of habituall grace already infused in them: They are indeed directed also to the unrenewed, who are hereby taught what they ought, but not what they are able to do, *Jer. 13. 23.* and are also inabled to do what they ought; the Lord making use of those exhortations, as means for conveying of strength to do that which he commandeth to be done; So, speaking unto them who were dead, v. 2. he prescribeth, *Mortifie your members.* 4. There is a body of sin, and corrupt nature in us, to which our particular vices, sinfull lusts, motions and affections are as members; Our corrupt nature and will making use of them, and working by them, as the naturall body doth imploy its members: besides that, sin doth spread it self through all the members of

our body, making each of them servants unto iniquity, *Rom. 6. 19.* Hence he saith, *Mortifie your members*, meaning those sinfull lusts and affections. 5. Not onely are the outward acts of fornication, or filthinesse, betwixt parties, both free from the yoke of marriage, to be eschewed; and of uncleannesse, whereby are usually signified all other sorts of filthy lusts, *Rom. 1. 24.* but also that impotencie of minde, whereby temptations to lust do easily take impression, and are not much resisted, set forth here by *inordinate affection*, or, (as it may be turned) *softness of minde*; which yeeldeth easily to the temptation: fornication, uncleannesse, *inordinate affection*. 6. Yea, the first inordinate motions of lust in the heart, which are not followed forth after deliberation and advice, and are set down under the name of *evill concupiscence*; even those are to be mortified: *evill concupiscence*. 7. We do then set against sin to some purpose, when we pursue it to the den, and labour to pluck it up by the very roots, with-drawing from those things which adde fuell to it; for he will have them going from the outward acts of filthinesse to the inward root: *evill concupiscence*; and to set against covetousnesse also, whereby lust is fed and nourished; *evill concupiscence and covetousnesse*. 8. Covetousnesse, which consists in an immoderate desire to acquire or keep worldly riches, is a sin which all Christians are to mortifie; not onely because it provideth oyl to make all other sins burn; but it hath a kind of idolatry in it, as drawing our love, trust, fear, and joy, from God and his service, to be taken up with, and laid out upon wealth, and riches, more than any other sins: *and covetousnesse which is idolatry*.

Verf. 6. For which things sake, the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.

He presseth the exhortation by arguments. The first is taken from the wrath of God, manifested in its sad effects upon those who have continued contumacious and impenitent under those sins. *Doct. 1.* Unbelief of divine pro-

promises and threatnings, and obstinat impenitency under sin, go together; the latter following upon the former: for, *disobedience* signifieth both misbelief, and contumacy, or disobedience. 2. It is not sin in it self so much, as obduration in it, which draweth down wrath, chiefly lasting wrath upon the sinner; For *those things wrath cometh upon the children of disobedience*, or children of contumacy. 3. Whatever judgments be already inflicted upon wicked men, they have ground to look for more; for, *wrath cometh in the mean time*, and is still coming upon the children of disobedience. 4. Though the Lord be sometimes wroth with the truly godly because of sin; yet he is not wroth for ever, *Isa. 57. 16.* he debateth with them but in measure, *Isa. 27. 7, 8.* The wrath which is due unto, and is accordingly poured forth upon contumacious sinners, is of another kind; as being everlasting, without any mixture of fatherly mercy, and flowing from sin-pursuing justice, *Matth. 25. 4.* for which cause he holdeth forth that wrath, *which cometh on the children of disobedience*, as being most terrifying. 5. As the consideration of the terror of divine wrath is a strong awband to restrain from sin; So it is most moving, when considered in the sad and woful experience of those who have found the dolefull effects of it: for, he mentioneth the effects of this wrath upon others to scar them. 6. Sin keepeth so much of its old interest in the best; and even Believers sometimes are so much overtaken with spiritual deadnesse, (*Isa. 64. 7.*) that there is need to present the terror of divine wrath unto them, to scar them from sin, and excite them to duty: for, the Apostle proponeth the terror of divine wrath, even to those believing Colossians.

Verf. 7. *In the which ye also walked sometime, when ye lived in them.*

Here is a second argument taken from their by-past long continuance in these sins, *when they lived in them*, or,

were in their natural state. *Dott. 1.* It is not some more or fewer particular acts of a man's life, but his ordinary strain and way, according to which, sentence is to passe upon his state, whether it be good or bad: It was their *walking* in sin, and making a daily trade of it, which argued them to be in nature, or *living in sin*. 2. Before a mans effectual calling, there is no difference betwixt him and the most godlesse man that is, so as to make God his debtor either by promise, or because of any worth which is in him to give him grace, *Rom. 11. 35.* for, as long as those Colossians were unconverted, they were as much inflaved to sin, as the most obstinat of natural men are: *In which ye also walked.* 3. A mans walking in sin, or his ordinary strain of breaking forth in the outward acts of it, dependeth upon his living in sin, or upon the inward power and dominion which sin exerceth in him, even as natural life is the cause of outward motion; So that the best way to curb the outward acts, is, to strike at the life and power of sin within; *In which ye walked when ye lived in them.* 4. Our calling to mind of by-past sins, and our long continuance in them, should not be without an holy indignation at them, and at our selves for them. so as to scar us from them in time coming: for, the Apostle mentioneth their by-past continuance in those sins, as one argument to scar them from them.

Verf. 8. But now you also put off all these, Anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

9. Lie not one to another,---

He returneth to the former exhortation of mortifying sin, and exemplifieth it in another sort of corruptions, to wit, those which are more spiritual, whereof he mentioneth six; The first three are sins of the heart, the rest are sins of the mouth. *Dott. 1.* So deceitful are our hearts in adhering to sin, even when they seem to quit it, *Psal. 78, 36, 37.* that we should not be easily satisfied with our

mortifying, or subduing of it : for, *Paul* (having commanded them to mortifie and kill sin, ver. 5.) he biddeth them here *put it off*, which speaks somewhat further, to wit, a removing of it quite out of sight, as we do dead bodies, when we bury them : for so the word sometimes signifieth. 2. Though all sins be not alike throughly mortified, there being some more deeply rooted than others, *Psal.* 18. v. -- 23. yet the grace of mortification striketh at all known sin, and spareth none ; for, it opposeth sin, as it is sin. *Gen.* 39. v. -- 9. and so all sin : So the Apostle commandeth, *But now also put you off all these*. And the particulars after mentioned are not for restriction, but for instance, or, example. 3. In the work of mortification we are not to rest upon the subduing of these sins which are grosse and fleshly, but are to proceed against more spiritual sins also, which have as much of guilt in them before God, (*Gal.* 5. 20.) though not so much of infamy before men ; So the Apostle exhorteth to *put off anger, wrath, &c.* 4. Anger, which (as distinguished from wrath and malice) is an unjust desire of revenge, is a sin unbecoming Christians, and so to be put off ; chiefly when *wrath* is joyned with it, which (as it is distinguished from anger) pointeth at the gorging and swelling of the blood about the heart, which fireth the eye and tongue, even that passionate commotion which useth to accompany anger, transforming a man to a very beast, thrusting him forward to act some mischief, *Luke* 4. 28, 29. and banishing the Spirit of God, *Eph.* 4. 30, 31. *Put off anger, wrath, &c.* 5. But then is anger and wrath most dangerous and unbecoming Christians, when *malice* is joyned, which (as it is distinguished from anger and wrath) is rooted anger, and continuing wrath, making a man implacable, and obstructing the current of pardoning grace, *Mark* 11. 26. and making all he doth in Gods service to be lost labour, *Matth.* 5. 23, 24. *Put off malice*. 6. Sins of the tongue and outward man, are to be mortified, as well as sins of the heart ; they being in some respect more dangerous, *Matth.* 18. 7. because more scan-

scandalous: Put off blasphemy, filthy communication, &c.
 7. The right order to be kept in mortification, is, to begin with the heart, and from thence to proceed to the tongue and outward man: for, he commandeth them to put off heart evils in the first place, *anger, wrath, and malice*; and the evils of the tongue, as *blasphemy, &c.* in the next,
 8. Disgraceful and contumelious speaking, against our neighbours, as it is the result of anger, wrath and malice: so it is a sin to be mortified, as very unbecoming Christians: whether it be by open railing, secret backbiting, *Pro. 26. 22.* by derision, or jeering at their sins and infirmities, to shame them, *Eph. 5. 4.* or by imprecation, cursing of, and wishing evil unto them, *Rom. 12. 14.* for, seeing the rest of the evils mentioned here relate to our neighbor, as their immediate object; we conceive the word *blasphemy* relates to him also, and is to be taken for disgrace in words uttered against men, as *Rom. 3. 8.*: *Blasphemy.*
 9. Filthy speaking, or speaking of those things which belong to the lust of uncleanness, is unbecoming Christians, and so to be mortified, as an evidence of a rotten heart, *Mat. 12. 34.* and because it maketh the heart more filthy, infecting also the hearers, *1 Cor. 15. 33.* the heart of man being as powder to the fire, easily taken with such tentations; *And filthy communication out of your mouth.*
 10. The sin of lying, whereby one speaketh that which he knoweth to be false. is a sin also to be mortified; and this indefinitely, whether we mean the *hurtful lie*, tending to our neighbours prejudice; or the *officious lie*, tending to our profit; or yet the *sporting lie*, tending to recreation or delight: Scripture condemneth all without restriction, *Revel. 21. 8.* and *22. 5.* and all of them violate that natural order which God hath appointed betwixt the mind and the tongue: *lie not one to another.*

Vers. 9. — seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds:

10. And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him.

Here

Here is a further argument, inforcing the exhortation, taken from the work of regeneration, to which, all of them were ingaged by their Profession and Covenant sealed in Baptism, and which was really begun in those who were true believers among them, whereof he assigneth two parts: First, *the putting off the old man with his deeds*, that is, our naturall corruption, conveyed unto us by carnall generation, and actuall sins flowing from thence, v.---9. Secondly, *putting on the new man*, that is, new and spirituall qualities, whereby our corrupt nature is renewed, the saving and operative knowledge of God in Christ, being imparted to it; which work, God by his creating power doth carry on, that thereby he may repair his defaced Image in man. *Diss. 1.* From this, that our originall corruption is called an *old man*, and is said to be *put off*, by a Metaphore taken from cloathes, we learn several things of the nature and power of it; first, originall corruption spreadeth it self far, even through the whole man, soul (*Gen. 6. 5.*) body, *Rom. 6. 19.* and all; therefore is it called a *man*. Secondly, Not onely is it born with us, but hath its rise from *Adams* fall, *Rom. 5. 12.* It then took life, and is conveyed since from father to son, unto all descending from *Adam*, *Ps. 51. 5.* by ordinary generation, *Luke 1. 35.* hence it is called an *old man*; as also because in the godly it is drawing towards expiration and upon the declining hand, *Rom. 7. 20.* Thirdly, it adhereth very closely to us, as a man's garments, and more closely than any garment, yea, nor a man's skin: for, humane art can draw off the one, but onely the power of God can free us from the other, *Rom. 7. 24.* Fourthly, it is not of the substance or being, either of soul or body, it is onely an adventitious quality, *Eccles. 7. 29.* for it is compared to garments. And fifthly, as old as this corruption is; yet it is very active and restless; not as other things, which as they grow in age, so fall more quiet; but this *old man* hath *his deeds*. And sixthly, as near unto us, as far spread through us, as old and active as this corruption is; the Child of God getteth

getteth it put off, though not fully, yet in its guilt, *Rom. 8. 1.* and in its esteem and reigne, *Rom. 6. 14.* in his resolution, *Rom. 7. 19.* and in some measure in his practice, and execution, *1 Cor. 6. 11.* This is supposed here, *seeing ye have put off the old man.* Doct. 2. According as the old man of our in-bred corruption is put off, and weakened within; So, actuall sins flowing there-from, are weakened without. The old hand and tongue are inconsistent with a renewed heart; *ye have put off the old man with his deeds.* 3. From this, that gracious and spiritual qualities are called the *new-man*, and said to be put on as new garments, we learn severall things relating to the nature of grace: First, it spreadeth it self as far through the whole man, as sin doth, *1 Thess. 5. 23.* So it's called a *man*. Secondly, it is not born with us, *Eph. 2. 3.* neither cometh it from the first, but second *Adam*, Christ Jesus, *Eph. 2. 8.* and is upon the growing hand, towards its full strength in the godly, *2 Cor. 4. 16.* therefore is it called *new*. Thirdly, it adhereth closely to us, as sin did, *1 Joh. 3. 9.* and yet is not naturall to us, but an addition to our nature, *1 Cor. 4. 7.* we are naked without it, and it is a beautifull ornament to the soul, as new garments are to the body, *Rev. 3. 17, 18.* from which the Metaphore is taken; *and have put on.* Doct. 4. We once had this new man, those gracious qualities, at our first creation: for, God made man perfect, *Eccles. 7. 29.* *which is renewed.* It signifieth, to restore a thing deformed and antiquated, to its ancient form and beautie. 5. Those gracious qualities were all lost unto us, to wit, in *Adam*: the Lord dealing with him in that first Covenant, as with a publick person, representing all who were to come of him, *Rom. 5. 12.* This is supposed, while he saith, *which is renewed.* 6. It is Christ's aim in giving grace, to recover that in his own which was lost in *Adam*: *which is renewed*, or restored to its ancient form and beauty; *and after the image of him, &c.* that is, the Image of God which was lost in *Adam*, *Gen. 5. 3.* and did consist in perfect conformity to God's Law, in both the Tables thereof, and accordingly

cordingly is set forth by righteousness and holiness, *Eph. 4. 24.* 7. The recovery of that which was lost in Adam, as it is begun in the first instant of regeneration; So, it's not compleated at first, but is a continued action, even unto death; *which is renewed*: It imports a continued action, the word being in the present time. 8. The sum and compend of this *new man*, is, the knowledge of God in Christ, not theoretick and notionall onely, but practicall and operative, which worketh such a change both in the outward and inward man, that the grace of God in Christ, is really acknowledged by us in our minde, affection and work, *Eph. 4. 21, 22. renewed in knowledge or acknowledgment*; for, so the word signifieth, and is rendered, *1 Cor. 16. 18.* 9. So dead are we by nature to holiness and grace, that no lesse than creating power is required to work it in us; *the image of him who created him.* 10. There is not any argument more moving and effectually exciting unto holiness of life with a sincere Christian, than that which is taken from his ingagement to it by profession, and the first beginning thereof wrought in him already by the Spirit of God: for, this is the scope, that they would mortifie and put off such and such sins; *seeing they had put off the old man, and put on the new.*

Verf. 11. *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.*

He amplifieth, cleareth and strengtheneth the former reason taken from renovation, by removing false causes of helping or hurting us before God in that matter; such as first, difference of Nations. Secondly, the observation of Mosaicall Ceremonies, the practice whereof, as of a thing indifferent, was allowed for a time unto the Jewes, *Rom. 1. 5.* untill they should be honourably buried by the more clear and universall propagation of the Gospel. Thirdly, polished civility and humane learning,

ing, which flourished among the Greeks, to whom all other Nations were Barbarians, chiefly the Scythians, as being more rude and unpolished than any other Nation. Fourthly, the different conditions of life, as of Master and Servant; under which are comprehended all the different states of men in things of this life: of all which he affirmeth that (however some of those differences had their own weight under the Old Testament, yet) now every man, in every state, was alike unto God in the point of renovation and salvation through Christ: the having of those things did help no man, and the want of them did hurt no man, Christ being all, which in point of Religion can commend us to God. *Doct. 1.* It is usuall for men to dream that they will be the better liked of by God, because of outward relations, privileges and accomplishments; which they enjoy beyond others: as that they are of such a Nation and stock of people, *Matth. 3. 9.* that they enjoy such privileges, *Ier. 7. 4.* that they are tight and smooth in their outward carriage, *Luke 18. 11.* that they are great, wise and rich, *Job. 7. 48.* for, it is to obviate this apprehension, that those words are added, shewing that the having of those things doth not help: *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew.* 2. It is usuall also for men to conclude, that God will take the lesse notice of them for the want of those things, as that they are come of an evill kinde, *Matth. 8. 8.* unpolished and rude in their naturals, *Job. 7. 49.* poor and base, *Mark 5. 28.* for, it's to obviate this apprehension also, that he sheweth, the want of those doth not hurt: *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew.* 3. Though under the Old Testament God did dispense grace, and the means of grace, with respect had to different Nations; yea, to the severall sexes, and the outward conditions of men; the Jews being then his onely people. (*Psal. 147. 19. 20.*) and among them the Males. (*Gen. 17. 10.*) and free-men, (*Levit. 22. 10.*) being admitted to enjoy some privileges, which the Females and bond-men enjoyed not: And though the Lord doth yet under the New Testam-

Testament; allow and command, that civill respects be put upon men, according to their different degrees. (*Rom. 13.7.*) and hath not abolished all Church-privileges either, which are to have their own weight and use with Christians, *Acts 2.39.* yet he doth not regard any of those in the matter of regeneration; so, as either to give grace the more readily, or to dispense with the want of grace, or, with intermitting the exercise of grace, because of having those things; or, to withhold grace the more, or, to think the lesse of it where it is, because of the want of those things; *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew.* 4. Jesus Christ is *all*, which God regardeth in the matter of regeneration: what is inlacking through want of privileges or outward eminencie, is made up in him; and what naturall men expect from those, is to be found in him, and much more: for, he is *all*, to wit, which is required in this matter: whatever a man be otherwayes, he is well, and commended sufficiently to God if he have him; and he is nought if he want him, even him, who is made of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption; *1 Cor. 1.30.* and this not onely, because he hath merited all, but by his Spirit he applyeth all to, and worketh all in, us: *but Christ is all.* 5. Before Christ be thus *all* unto the soul, he must first be in us; not personally, as the Godhead is in the Humane Nature, *chap. 2.9.* but spiritually, he being united to us, and we to him by faith, *Eph. 3. 17.* So, *he is all in all.* 6. Christ in uniting himself to sinners, hath no exception of persons, because of outward respects; he will neither respect, nor reject the poor for their poverty, nor the great for their dignity: *he is all in all.*

Verf. 12. Put on therefore (as the elect of God holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindnesse, humblenesse of minde, meeknesse, long-suffering:

Thus far of mortification, from v. 5. The second branch of a Christian man's task, is, the putting on, and exercising

sing of severall vertues, whereof he numbereth five in this verse: the first three, respect our neighbour in misery; the last two, respect our neighbour also, but as having injured us; and he presseth them from their election, sanctification, and state of favour with God. *Dost. 1.* It is not sufficient to cease from doing evil, but we must also learn to do well: and the same arguments which inforce the one, do also inforce the other; for (having pressed upon them to mortifie sin in the verses preceding) he exhorts them to do good in this verse; and that by the same argument, as appears from the illative particle *therefore: put on therefore.* 2. There is a necessary connexion betwixt the new man, or, habits of grace in the heart, and the exercise of Christian vertues in those duties which we owe to our neighbour: for, from what he hath said verse 10. of their having put on the new man, he presseth upon them the exercise of those vertues; *put on therefore.* 3. The knowledge of our election in its own nature, is so far from making us loose the reins to profanity, that it layeth on a strict obligation to lead an holy life; So he reasoneth from their election to the exercise of those vertues: for, those arguments, as it seemeth, speak only to the truly gracious among them: *put on therefore, as the elect of God.* 4. Then do we rightly passe sentence upon our selves as elected, when our holiness doth kyth; for, he joyneth these two, *the elect of God, holy*; the latter as the evidence of the former. 5. Our having holiness, and our knowing so much, is a strong argument to excite unto more holiness; So he reasoneth from their being holy, *put on therefore as the elect of God, holy.* 6. The Lord's love of complacencie towards us, whereby he delighteth in those who are truly gracious, approving of his own graces in them, *Job. 14. 21.* should constrain us to love him again, and kyth our love in the exercise of those graces which he calleth for in relation to our neighbour: for, he calls them *beloved*, to wit, with the Lords love of complacencie, seeing it is distinguished from his eternall love of election; and reasoneth from

from their being so beloved: *Put on as beloved.* 7. We ought to have a most inward sense of, and sympathie with the misery of others; *put on bowels of mercy*: the word expresseth such an intense motion of the heart and soul, that the very fleshly bowels are commoved by it. 8. Our sympathie with others under miserie, ought not to be inward onely, but outward also, by helping them in their misery according to our power, which is here expressed by *kindnesse*, which they were to *put on*. 9. The grace of humility, whereby a man from the sense of his own infirmities, hath a moderate esteem of himself, (*Phil. 2. 3.*) and desireth that others should have such an esteem of him also, (*1 Cor. 3. 5.*) is most necessary. *mak- ing way for more grace, 1 Pet. 5. 9. humblenesse of minde.* 10. The grace of meeknesse, which maketh a man tractable, so that he is not easily provoked with the foeries, infirmities, and lesser wrongs done unto him by others: as also *long-suffering*, which moderateth anger, even under greater injuries; both of those are necessary graces: for, hereby we are made to bear with the infirmities of others, and so to cure them, *Gal. 6. 1.* we are kept from avenging our selves, *Rom. 12. 18, 19.* and in our patience made to possesse our souls, *Luke 21. 19.* *put on meeknesse, long-suffering.*

Verf. 13. *Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; if any man have a quarrell against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*

He recommendeth the practice of meeknesse and long-suffering, which consists in bearing with, and pardoning even of reall injuries done by others, and perswadeth them unto it, from Christ's example in pardoning us. *Doff. 1.* Christians are not so perfect, but they will be in some things unpleasant: yea, and sometimes injurious to others. This is supponed while they are commanded to *forbear one another*: 2. It is the duty of Christians, mutually to tolerate and forbear one another,

ther, even though they be injurious : for, hereby a man overcometh himself and his own corrupt nature, which thirsteth after revenge, *Prov. 16. 32.* hereby he overcometh and shameth the party who did him wrong, *1 Sam. 24. 17.* and keepeth God's way in overcoming of him, *Rom. 12. 17. 31. forbearing one another.* 3. It is not onely required of Christians to forbear avenging of themselves, but also to forgive and pardon those who have done them wrong ; which, besides ceasing from private revenge, doth import the banishing of malice and desire of revenge out of the heart, yea, and loving those who do us hurt, *Luke 6. 27. forgiving one another.* Onely the Magistrate is not hereby bound up from executing his office against publick offenders ; nor yet private men are discharged from having recourse to the Magistrate ; for attaining restitution to their right, and reparation of their wrongs, providing they be not acted with private spleene, and a spirit of rigour, (*Psi. 4. 5.*) but with zeal to justice, and pity to their party ; lest he, and others also be hardened in mischief : for, magistracy is God's ordinance, *Rom. 13. 4.* and so may be employed by Christians. 4. Duties of forbearance, and forgiving wrongs, ought to be mutuall ; there being no man who hath not somewhat which maketh him the object of those duties, *James 3. 2.* So, *forbearing one another,* is required. 5. The fore-mentioned duties are also to be gone about by all, towards all, without exception of persons or quarrels : the rich are to perform them towards the poor, aswell as the poor towards the rich : for, he speaks indefinitely, both as to persons and injuries ; *If any man have a quarrell against any.* 6. The more a man attains to know ; that Christ hath pardon'd himself, he will be the more inclinable to show forgiveness unto others : hence he speaketh confidently to such, *even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.* 7. The example of Christ is a most convincing pattern for exciting us to pardon and forgive one another, if we consider either the greatnesse of those wrongs which he pardoneth, (*Isai. 1. 18.*) or our baseness

ness who do injure him, (*Isai. 40.-22.*) or, his omnipotence to right himself of the wrongs done unto him; *Matth. 10. 28.* Hence the Apostle holds forth this pattern: *even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*

Vers. 14. *And above all things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.*

The Apostle, following the Metaphor taken from garments, exhorteth them to put on the grace of Charity, as the upper garment above the rest, and so more precious than the rest, commending it from this, that it is a tie or bond, which knitteth all the Members of the Church together, and maketh all their severall gifts and graces cohere, and so be usefull for the publick good; whereby the Church is made a perfect Body; able to discharge those actions which are competent to it. *Doct. 1.* The grace of Charity, whereby from the fountain of love to God, we do love our neighbour, (*Matth. 22. 37. 38.*) is a most necessary grace; for, whatever we do without it, is not the exercise of any saving grace, but at the best onely of a morall vertue. *1 Cor. 13. 2, 3.* and the acts of all other vertues relating to our neighbour, are commended by it, and so are ascribed to it. *1 Cor. 13. 4. &c.* Hence the Apostle commendeth to *put on charity*, as the upper garment *above all these.* 2. As the Church, while rent asunder, is a disjoynted and lame body, unfit for discharging those actions which are competent to it (the rent and scattered members not working together for the Churches good; but rather imploying their parts, and abusing their esteem for graces to their own mutual prejudice) So, such is the nature and power of this grace of Charity, that it knitteth together all these scattered Members, and makes their graces and gifts subservient to the good one of another, and chiefly to the good of the whole; so that the Church is hereby made a compleat intire body, which was lame without it. In this sense *Charity* is called *the bond of perfection.*

Verſe 15. *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which alſo ye are called in one body: and be ye thankful.*

He exhorts, firſt, unto a peaceable frame of Spirit towards others, ſuch as God approveth of; ſo that when any ſtrife ſhould ariſe among them, it might be overruled, and as it were, judicially compoſed by this peaceable temper: and this, becauſe they were called by God to entertain peace, and were all Members of one Body. And ſecondly, he exhorteth unto mutuall thankfulneſſe for favours received; for, as all the former duties relate to men as their immediate object; ſo, it would ſeem, this of *thankfulneſſe* muſt relate to man alſo. *Doct. 1.* The virtue of peace, importing a ſweet quieting of a man's own turbulent affections, ſuch as pride, envy, malice, &c. *Iſai. 11. 13.* and a peaceable inclination towards the procuring and preſerving of concord with others. (*Heb. 12. 14.*) is moſt neceſſary for Chriſtians: *and let the peace of God rule.* 2. It is not every peaceable frame of Spirit which is to be ſought after, but that whereof God is the Author and approver; which for attaining unto, or preſerving of concord, will diſpenſe with the loſſe, not of truth and holineſſe, (*Heb. 12. 14.*) but onely of what is our own, eſpecially with the reſtraining and curbing of our finfull and turbulent humors, *2 Cor. 12. 20.* So it is *the peace of God*, to wit, whereof he is Author and approver, which ſhould rule. 4. Our eſteem of peace ought to be ſuch, that when any contention doth ariſe, our love to peace may preſently compoſe it, if it be poſſible, or at leaſt, order all our actions, which we are put to for our own neceſſary defence untill it be compoſed, (*Gen. 13. 8. 9.*) *let the peace of God rule in your hearts:* It is a Metaphor taken from Judges in playes or ſtrifes, unto whole decreet all were bound to ſtand. 5. Chriſtians are called in a ſingular manner, to put on this peaceable temper; for, Chriſt doth

fire

frequently injoyne it, *Job. 13. 34.* nothing marreth their work more, than the want of it. whether the thriving of grace in their own heart, or the successe of the Gospel towards others, *1 Cor. 3. 3.* they are called to be members of an excellent society, and so ought to be peaceable in it, *1 Theff. 5. 13.* To which also ye are called. 6. The invisible Church of real Believers is one mystical body, knit by faith to Christ their head, *Eph. 3. 17.* and by the bond of love among themselves, *Job. 13. 35.* and the visible Church is one politick body (*1 Cor. 12. 27.*) conjoynd with Christ the head, and amongst themselves by the external profession of the same Truths, which union is sealed by their partaking of the same Sacraments, *1 Cor. 10. 17.* In one body. 7. The consideration of this, that Christians are one body, is a strong argument to excite unto peace; *In one body.* 8. Gratitude and thankfulness for favours received from others; so as in our affections to prize the receipt, to acknowledge it unto the bestower, and to recompense it according to our power, and as the necessity of the benefactor, or common decency doth require; this is a vertue necessary for Christians, as for other causes, so that peace may be kept; peace being broken, as frequently for injuries received; so sometimes for favours not recompensed, *1 Sam. 25. 7, 13.* Therefore, unto the exhortation to peace; he subjoyneth, *and be ye thankful.*

Verf. 16. *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grate in your hearts to the Lord.*

The Apostle having spoken of many vertues, and it being almost impossible to speak of all, he exciteth them to the diligent study of Scripture, as the rule of all vertues; shewing also what use they should make of Scripture. First, for themselves, that they might be made compleatly wise by it. Secondly, for others, that they

might teach and admonish them by it. Thirdly, in relation to God, they might take matter for spiritual praise unto him from it. *Doct. 1.* Ministers should excite people to the diligent study of Scripture: and people ought to be diligent in the study of it, so as they may become familiar with it, and it may sink down through the ear and brain to the heart, and reside in it. being fixed there by frequent reading, bearing, meditating upon, *Psal. 1. 2.* and conferring about it, *Pf. 119. 46.* whereby also they may attain to a copious measure of the knowledge of it: for, saith he, *Let the word of Christ*, that is, chiefly the Gospel, *Heb. 2. 3.* not excluding other Scriptures: (for the Prophets were inspired by the Spirit of Christ, *1 Pet. 3. 19* and did also write of Christ, *Job 5. 39.* So that whole Scripture is the word of Christ:) *and let it dwell in you:* it's a metaphor which speaketh inward receiving of it, and familiar conversing with it; *and let it dwell richly;* or, copiously, *in you.* 2. There is that in Scripture, which is sufficient to make a man compleatly wise unto salvation, as containing all things necessary to be believed, or practised, *2 Tim. 3. 15.* for, this is the first fruit to be reaped by the study of Scripture, it affordeth all wisdom: *In all wisdom.* 3. It is not only the duty of Ministers, but also of private Christians, keeping themselves within their station, and not usurping upon the Ministerial Calling, (*Rom. 10. 15.*) privately to teach and instruct, as also to admonish, and reprove one another: and the knowledge and wisdom which they draw from Scripture, is to be employed for this end, next after the advancing of their own salvation, and not for vain ostentation, profane jesting, or idle jangling, *1 Tim. 1. 4. 6.* *In all wisdom, teaching and admonishing.* 4. The duties of teaching and admonishing among private Christians, ought to be mutual; there being none so compleat for knowledge, so streight in his practice, but he standeth in need to have those duties performed sometimes to him by others: *admonishing one another.* 5. Singing to God with the voice, is a profitable Ordinance of Gods Worship

ship under the Gospel ; as not only holding forth that which the Word read doth, but also staying the heart upon the sweet and lively meditation of the matter which we sing, and is most natively directed to the glorifying of God, as its proper and immediate scope : *singing, &c.* 6. The Psalms of David, and other scriptural Songs in the in the old Testament, may, and ought to be sung in this part of Gospel-worship : for, saith he, *in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing, &c.* or rather, *singing in psalms, hymns, &c.* for so the words may be rendered : now all agree that hereby are designed the Psalms of David, and other scriptural Songs, though there be some difference about the kind of Songs, which are intended to be expressed by every one of those in particular. 7. That this piece of Gospel-worship may be gone about acceptably, First, Our Songs would be spiritual, and this not only for the matter, but because of the assistance of Gods Spirit, and of a spiritual frame of heart which is required for singing aright, *Eph. 5. 18, 19.* Secondly, They would carry with them a kind of delectable edification to the hearers, as being sung with grave and melodious tones, and so, as the matter which is sung may be understood by others, *1 Cor. 14. 15.* This is *to sing with grace*, or, in a delicious and edifying strain, so is the word taken, chap. 4. v. 6. Thirdly, Except the heart and inward affection be stirring in this duty ; the outward grace, and delectation, which is in it, serveth for no purpose : *singing in your hearts.* Fourthly, In singing, the heart ought to be taken up immediatly with the thoughts of praise unto God, arising from the consideration of the matter, which will alwayes furnish a heart rightly disposed with some thoughts of that kind : *singing in your hearts to the Lord.*

Verf. 17. *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

He giveth a common rule for all our actions, that they be

undertaken in Christ's Name, and that thanks be given to God the Father through Christ for the event or successe of them. *Doff.* 1. Christians are not left to their liberty, neither in things necessary, nor yet altogether in things of their own nature indifferent, neither in their words nor deeds; nor yet their thoughts (for those are deeds or actions of the mind and inward man) to do as they please in them; but are tied to walk by a rule: and particularly they are to be ruled by Christ's command, with in-calling of his help, and aiming at his glory in what they do; for, *doing in his Name*, importeth all those three, *Matth.* 18. 20. *Luke* 10. 17. *Psal.* 31. 3. and however it be impossible to have an actual purpose to glorifie him, and imploy his help actually for every thought, word and deed; yet the heart would be habitually inclined to do all things in his strength, and for him; and in solemn and weighty actions there ought to be an actual purpose of this kind; *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus.* 2. They who do all things in Christ's Name, will have still abundant matter of thanksgiving to God in the close of their action, whatever be the event; *do all things in the Name, &c. giving thanks.* 3. We ought to acknowledge thankfully our obligation to God for the successe and event of our lawful undertakings, Not sacrificing to our own net, or burning incense to our own drag, *Hab.* 1. 16. *Giving thanks to God, and the Father*, or God, who is the Father: (see upon chap. 1. ver. 3.) which excludeth not the other two persons; but the Father being the fountain of the Deity, from whom, as the prime author, all good things are derived to us, by mediation of the Son, the holy Spirit working them in us: Therefore, that the order both of nature, and of operation may be pointed at, for the most part we expresse the Father both in our prayers and praises, not excluding the other two persons. 4. There is no address to the Father in any duty whether of prayer or praise, so, as to be born through, or accepted in it, but through Jesus Christ: *giving thanks to God, and the Father by him.*

Ver.

Verf. 18. *Wives, submit your selves unto your own husbands,*
as it is fit in the Lord.

In the second part of the chapter, from this verse to the end, he treateth of these duties which relate to Christians, as they are members of a family; and as there are in every compleat family three pairs, to wit, Husband and Wife, Parents and Children, Masters and Servants; whereof the latter is alwayes inferiour to the former: so he points at the duty of each of those, and still beginneth with the inferiour first, because their duty, through the subjection which is in it, is more difficile, and being made conscience of, is a strong motive unto the superiour to go about his duty also: and first he presseth upon wives their duty, to wit, subjection to their husbands, from the conveniency of it; and qualifieth their subjection, that it be *in the Lord*. *Doct. 1.* It is not sufficient for Christians to go about general and common duties of Christianity, but those other duties which belong to them as being in such a state of life, to wit, as *Magistrates, Ministers, Husbands, Wives, &c.* must be in a special manner made conscience of: for, the Apostle having exhorted unto those common vertues, doth now presse such duties as concern Christians in their particular vocations: *Wives, submit your selves, &c.* 2. It is much for the advantage of Religion, that particular families be well ordered, the whole Church being made up of those; hence he presseth much those duties which belong unto Christians, as they are members of families; *Wives, submit your selves, &c.* 3. The sum of a Wives duty unto her Husband, is, subjection, which comprehendeth a reverend esteem of him, *Eph. 5. 33.* respective speaking of him, and to him, *1 Pet. 3. 6.* and obedience to him in things lawful, *1 Pet. 3. 5, 6.* *Wives, submit, or, subiect your selves.* 4. However a womans own husband may come far short of others in parts, gifts, and every other thing which deserveth reverence and subjection, *1 Sam.*

35. 17. yet because of the Ordinance of God, and that peace may be kept betwixt man & wife, she is to submit to her own husband, respecting none so much as him, depending upon none, and following the counsel and direction of none so much as his; for so the Apostle commands, *Submit unto your own husbands.* 5. Whether we consider the Ordinance of God injoyning, or the infirmity of the woman, as being of the weaker sex, or the great inconvenience of jealousie, hatred and strife which followeth upon the denying of this subjection, it will be found most convenient, equitable and just, that *wives be subject unto their husbands, as it is fit.* 6. The subjection which a wife doth owe unto her husband, is in the Lord Christ, so that in the first place she is to subject her self to Christ, and from love unto him, to subject her self to her husband; whence it will follow, that she is to obey him only in things lawful, and to look upon her subjection as service done unto Christ, which may give her comfort against an unkind return from her husband: for, he saith, *as it is fit in the Lord.*

Verf. 19. *Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.*

He exhorteth husbands to love their wives, as the sum and fountain of all other duties which they owe unto them, and forbiddeth bitterness towards them. *Dock. 1.* As the Lord hath not tied inferiours to their duty, leaving superiours at liberty to do what they will in theirs; So the mutual discharge of duty betwixt superiours and inferiours, man and wife, parent and children, master and servant, is a great encouragement for every one to set about their own duty, as having not only the command of God for it, but an answerable return from those to whom they do that duty; hence, having pressed upon wives their duty, he doth the like unto the husbands, and so in the rest: *Husbands, love your wives.* 2. The sum of an husbands duty towards his wife, is, to love her: there ought

ought to be love in affection, and that most ardent, *Eph.* 5. 25. and love kything in its effects, so as that he delight to dwell with her, *Pro.* 5. 18, 19. so, as that he lovingly direct and instruct her, *1 Cor.* 14. 35. and so, as he provide for her in all things according to his power, which either her necessity, or dignity of her rank doth call for, *1 Tim.* 5. 8. *Husbands, love your wives.* 3. Bitternesse in husbands towards their wives is a sin to be eschewed much: he is to eschew bitternesse in his affections, so as not to hate her, or cold-risely to love her, *Eph.* 5. 29. bitternesse in words, so as not for light causes to upbraid her, or speak contumeliously of her, *Pro.* 5. 18. And most of all, bitternesse in deeds, which consists in giving her little or no trust in the family, *Pro.* 31. 15. and with-holding from her things necessary for her supply, *1 Tim.* 5. 8. and in beating her, which is contrary both to the Law of God (*Eph.* 5. 29.) and Nature, so that very Heathens did abhor it: *be not bitter against them.* It's a word taken from unsavory meats, pointing that his conversation in all things should be delicious, sweet, and meek.

Verf. 20. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord.

He commandeth children (under which, according to the Scripture-phrase, are comprehended sons and daughters in law, &c. *Ruth* 1. 11, 12.) to obey their parents in all things, to wit, which are not forbidden by God; and that because hereby they do acceptable service to God. *Doct. 1.* The sum of childrens duty towards their parents, is obedience: the Greek word signifieth obedience flowing from inward respect and reverence, which is to be testified by reverent speaking of them, and to them, *Pro.* 30. 17. by giving obedience to their just commands, and by thankful recompensing of them, chiefly if they fall in straits, *1 Tim.* 5. 4. *Children, obey your parents.* 2. Age, or length of days doth not exempt children from this duty: Children indeed, who are foris-familiate, are not tied

tied to cohabit with parents, and to care for their affairs according to their direction, *Gen. 2. 24.* (which children under the care of parents are tied unto, as being members of the family, *Gen. 37. 12, 13.*) but they are bound to reverence their parents, and be thankful to them as their necessity requires: for, the word rendered *Children*, signifieth all who are begotten, whatever be their age: *Children, obey your parents.* 3. The obedience which children owe to parents is of very large extent, even to *all things*, to wit, not forbidden of God, *Eph. 6. 1.* which limitation is insinuated here in the reason of the command, *for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord*: but it extendeth to all other things; as, if the thing commanded be good, or in its own nature indifferent; yea, even their rigid and seemingly unreasonable commands in things indifferent, are not to be disobeyed, (*Gen. 22. 6.*) if they cannot be otherwise diverted: *Obey your parents in all things.* 4. As obedience to parents is very acceptable to God: for, it's enjoined in the first Command with promise, and in the second Table, *Eph. 6. 2.* So, that children may obey their parents aright, it is necessary that their hearts be touched with some reverence towards God, and a desire to please him, which will make them endeavour to please their parents in God, and thereby do service to God: The argument used to inforce obedience, beareth this much; *for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.*

Verf. 21. *Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.*

Because parents are apt to abuse their parental authority, and chiefly the fathers, Therefore he enjoyneth them to use it moderately, not irritating their children lest they turn heartlesse and discouraged. *Doct. 1.* Fathers are so to use their authority over their children, as not to give them just cause of irritation, whether by denying unto them that which is their due in food, raiment, or means of education, *1 Tim. 5. 8.* or by commanding things in themselves unjust, *1 Sam. 20. 31, 34.* or by unjust and

rigorous

rigorous commands about things in their own nature indifferent, or inveighing with bitter words against them, chiefly when there is no cause, 1 Sam. 20. 30, and lastly; by beating them either unjustly, when there is no fault; or immoderately, when there is a fault (for just and moderate correction is necessary, Pro. 13. 24.) *Fathers, provoke not your children to anger.* 2. As parents by too much indulgence towards children make them sluggish, petulant, or prophane, Pro. 29. 15: So by their immoderate severity, they make them dull to action, heartlesse and discouraged, from whence do flow sicknesses, and death; yea, and sometimes desperate contumacy: the consideration whereof should make parents deal more gently with them, though they are alwayes to keep up their fatherly authority: for, this is given as a reason of the prohibition, *lest they be discouraged.*

Verf. 22. *Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God.*

He entereth here upon the duty of servants, whereon he insisteth, not only because their condition was most hard, as being for the most part bought slaves; but also, it seemeth severals of them, under pretence of Christian Liberty, did shake off the yoke, their masters being unconverted Pagans; whereby Satan did labour to make the Gospel odious: Therefore Paul exhorteth them to obey their masters (who had power over their flesh and bodies) in all things lawfull: and that not only when their masters were present, as labouring meerly to please them, but in sincerity of heart, as fearing the all-seeing eye of God. *Doff.* 1. The freedom purchased by Christ, and offered in the Gospel, is spiritual, to wit, from the condemning power of the Law, Gal. 3. 13. from the dominion of sin, Rom. 6. 18. and the legal ceremonies, Gal. 2. 4. But it is not bodily: the Gospel doth not meddle with a mans outward estate; as it findes him, whether
master

Master or Servant, so it leaves him, 1 Cor. 7. 21. for some of those Colossians were Servants before conversion, and they remain so after conversion: *Servants, &c.* 2. The dominion which Masters have over Servants, is onely in things temporall and of the flesh; it is not over the conscience; in which respect there is onely one Lord and Master, *Matth. 23. 8.* and Law-giver, *James 4. 12.* for they are called *masters according to the flesh*, to denote the extent of their mastership. 3. As the sum of those duties, which servants owe to their masters is, obedience, which supponeth respect and reverence: So, this obedience is of large extent, to wit, to all things not forbidden of God, even their rigid commands are not to be condemned, 1 *Pet. 2. 18. obey in all things your masters.* 4. When servants seem respective to their masters person, and carefull of what concerneth him, himself being present; or, when they know the thing which they do, will come otherwayes to his knowledge, but at other times are unfaithfull or carelesse, this is a sin much to be condemned, as evidencing they seek no more but humane approbation, so as if they can get the eyes of men sylored, they regard not the anger of God: for, this is *eye-service* here condemned and he calleth those who are guilty of it, *men-pleasers*: *Not with eye-service as men-pleasers.* 5. Servants ought to serve their Master, and to minde his businesse in *singlenesse of heart*, that is, whether their master be present or absent; whether their actions come to his knowledge or not, they may be alwayes most seriously affected towards the thriving of his affairs: *In singlenesse of heart.* 6. It is onely the impression of the awe and fear of God upon the heart, which will make a servant minde his masters businesse thus: Service in singlenesse of heart, is not to be expected from wicked servants, destitute of the fear of God: *but in singlenesse of heart, fearing God.*

Verf. 23. *And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men:*

He qualificth the obedience required, that it be hearty and willing, without grudging: because therein they ought to eye God, more than man: for, the negative particle doth not deny simply, but comparatively; so that *as to the Lord, and not to men*, is, to the Lord more than to men, as *Mark 9. 37. Doct. 1.* Servants should do their service willingly, carefully, readily and pleasantly; for then do they it from the heart, otherwayes it's neither acceptable to God, nor men: for, though man do not see the heart, yet heart-unwillingnesse doth kyth in a backward and unpleasant carriage; *Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily.* 2. Servants should so go about their duty to men, as therein to look unto God, more than man, by doing it, because God commandeth it, and in the way wherein he doth command it, and in making conscience of their duty to man out of conscience to God, even when masters fail in theirs, *1 Pet. 2. 18, 19.* And except servants eye God thus, they have but small encouragement otherwayes to do their duty heartily: for he commandeth them to *do as unto the Lord, and not unto men*, in order to make them do heartily.

Verf. 24. *Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.*

That he may excite servants to their duty, he useth some arguments: the first taken from that free retribution of the heavenly Inheritance, which Christ shall give unto those who serve him in their calling, and to believing servants among the rest. *Doct. 1.* There is no calling so mean or base, which is lawfull, and piously gone about, wherein a rich reward is not to be expected from God; even *Servants shall receive the reward.* 2. So poor

poor is the reward which servants have to expect from their Masters; and what is promised, is often so slightly payed, that for their encouragement, they would cast their eye frequently upon the reward of this heavenly Inheritance: for, the Apostle holdeth it out to be eyed by them; while he saith, *of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance.* 3. In Heaven there is no distinction of servants and sons: all are children and heirs who are there; even servants *shall receive the inheritance of sons.* 4. Whatever reward is promised to any work of ours, it proceedeth not from the worth which is in the work, but from God's free grace, who freely promised; for *it's the reward of an inheritance*; the word signifieth, an inheritance obtained by lot; wherein least of man is seen. 5. Promises have no influence to excite unto duty, except the truth of them be known and believed: divine Truths are looked upon by many as fancies; hence there is so much preaching of them; and so little wrought by them; *Knowing that of the Lord.* 6. As Christ will have none to serve him for nothing: so, the meanest service that is, being done with the right qualifications, is service done to Christ: for, so speaketh he here of servants; *ye serve the Lord Christ*, and hereby assurcth them of the reward.

Verf. 25. *But he that doth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.*

Here is a second argument taken from Gods judgment to come, whether upon Masters or Servants who do wrong, confirmed from this, that God is no acceptor of persons. *Doff. 1.* Hope of reward is not sufficient to draw men to their duty, except they be also driven to it by the fear of punishment: for, so much is grounded upon those words, as they speak to Servants, to whom the promise was but presently proponed; *but he that doth wrong, shall receive.* 2. So just is God, that he will not passe by those

those wrongs which are least thought of by men: such are the mutuall injuries of Masters and Servants: for he, whether Master or Servant, *that doth wrong, shall receive for the wrong.* 3. The Lord keepeth a proportion betwixt sins and strokes, so that the more wrong a man doth, the sorer shall his punishment be, *Heb. 10. 29. for he shall receive his wrong,* that is, a just retribution according to his wrong. 4. It is usuall for people to conceit of somewhat in themselves, for respect to which they will not be so dealt with by God, as others, though they be alike guilty; some do thus conceit of their riches, some of their poverty, some of their parts: see *doct. 1. upon v. 11.* For, his vindicating God from having any such respect to persons, imports, that it is usuall for men to have contrary thoughts of him. 5. There is no such respect of persons with God; he will spare none for outward respects, as being free of all those base passions, which make men wrest judgement for respect to persons: he feareth not the great, he is not preposterously compassionate towards the poor, he coveteth not the gold of the rich, and hath no interest divided from that of eternity and justice, *Genes. 18. 25.* So that *with God* there neither is, nor can be respect of persons.

CHAP. I V.

IN the first part of this Chapter, the Apostle (having set down the duty of masters towards servants, v. 1.) exhorteth those Colossians unto severall duties, as to prayer, v. 2. and to pray for himself in particular, v. 3, 4. and to circumspect walking towards Heathens. v. 5. and to aim at delectable edification in their discourse, v. 6.

In the second part he declareth, why he send *Tysbeus*

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and Onesimus unto them, whom he highly commendeth, v. 7, 8, 9.

In the third part, are, first, salutations, whereof some were sent to the Colossians from three of the Circumcission, who are described, and commended, v. 10, 11. some from their own Minister *Epaphras*, whom he highly commendeth, v. 12, 13. some from *Luke* and *Demas*, v. 14. and the rest from *Paul* himself to the Laodiceans, v. 15. And secondly, some directions unto them for use-making of this Epistle, v. 16. and that they would admonish their Minister, v. 17. and so he puts a close to the Epistle, v. 18.

Verf. 1. *Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equall, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.*

THIS verse seemeth to be a part of the preceding Chapter, whether we look to the purpose which goeth before, or to that which doth follow; wherein he exhorts masters to give unto their servants that which they were obliged, whether by strict Law and condition, or by the Law of charity and christian meeknesse; and that, because they had a Master in Heaven, who would reckon with them if they did otherwayes. *Doct. 1.* Masters ought to give unto their servants that which is just, that is, what they are tyed unto by the rule of strict justice; as first, food competent to their service and state, *Prov. 31. 15.* Secondly, their hire, *James 5. 4.* And thirdly, work, wherein they are not to presse them rigorously, and above their power, *Prov. 12. 10.* nor yet suffer them to be altogether idle, *Prov. 29. 21.* for, saith he, *Masters, give unto your servants that which is just.* *Doct. 2.* They are also bound to give unto them that which is equall, that is, what they are tyed unto by the rule of charity and christian meeknesse; as first, to see that they serve God, which is enjoined to Masters in the fourth Command. Secondly, not to do all with them by boast and

terror, as if they were beasts; but to draw them on with meeknesse, as being of the same nature with themselves, *Eph. 6. 9.* Thirdly, not to be tyrannicall; by making their will an absolute rule for them; but to hear them when in modestie they produce reason to the contrary, *Job 31. 13, 14.* Fourthly, to have respect unto their infirmities by caring for them when they are sick, *Matth. 8. 6.* Yea, and fifthly, to let somewhat fall beyond condition unto those who are faithfull, *Prov. 14. 35.* Give unto your servants that which is equall. Doct. 3. A right to Heaven and the heavenly Inheritance, ought not to prejudge a man in what is due unto him of things worldly: A right unto the one, doth not enervate, but rather establisheth their right unto the other; and so they may without offence seek and plead for what is due unto them: Thus notwithstanding that Heaven is promised (chap. 3. v. 24.) to godly servants, yet masters are commanded to give them that which is just and equall. 4. The greater that men are in the world, they stand in more need to have the terror of God presented unto them, that thereby they may be excited to their duty: for, as he proponed a comfortable promise unto the poor servants, (chap. 3. v. 24.) so he boasteth masters with the consideration of God's greatnesse, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven. 5. Superiors and masters should so carry themselves, as remembring they have one above them to call them to an accompt; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven. 6. We would so represent God unto our selves, as may serve best to restrain from sin, and put us upon our duty: for, to inforce the exhortation, he proponeth God unto them, as their master in heaven, which speaketh his absolute dominion, *2 Chron. 20. 6.* his omniscience, *Psal. 11. 4.* his holiness, *Isai. 57. 15.* and his omnipotency, *Psal. 115. 3.* So that their sin could not be hid from him; his holy nature did hate it, he had both right and power to punish it: ye also have a Master in heaven.

Verſ. 2. *Continue in prayer, and watch in the ſame with thankſgiving.*

He exhortheth unto the exerciſe of prayer, and to ſome conditions required for the right diſcharging of this duty. As firſt, Inſtant and vehement perſevering in it. Secondly, Watchfulneſſe and fervency. Thirdly, Thankfulneſſe. *Doct. 1.* The exerciſe of prayer is neceſſary for the right performance of commanded duties; it being a mean, in the uſe whereof, covenanted ſtrength and influence is conveyed unto us, *Matth. 7. 7.* without which we can do nothing: for, unto the former exhortations, he ſubjoyneth, *Continue in prayer.* 2. We ought to continue and perſevere in this exerciſe, oppoſing all tentations mightily which tend to make us quite it; *Continue in prayer.* The word ſignifieth to continue with ſtrength, ſo as no labour or toil do make us weary, or give it over. Which continuance relateth firſt to the diſpoſition of the heart, being ſtill kept in a fitneſſe to go about that duty, when occaſion offereth; and next to the actual exerciſe it ſelf that it be ſometimes every day at leaſt gone about, and alwayes, when there is oportunity, though we are not to quite all other duties, that we may be wholly, conſtantly, and only in this, ſee *2 Sam. 9. 13.* *Doct. 3.* That this exerciſe of prayer be diſcharged aright, watchfulneſſe is required, a watchfulneſſe eſpecially of the mind; & this firſt, before we come to the duty, watching for an oportunity of praying, ſeaſhing out and obſerving thoſe things which may furniſh matter for prayer, as Gods mercies, and our own eſcapes. Secondly, in the duty, that we be intent upon it, our graces kept in exerciſe while we are at it, and what is Gods dealing with the ſoul in it may be obſerved, as if he ſtraiten, give liberty, hide his face, or ſhew himſelf gracious. Thirdly, after the duty, as what answers we receive; and leſt we be overtaken either with pride for doing well, or with diſcouragement for our coming ſhort; *And watch in the ſame.*

4. Thanksgiving for favours already received, ought to be joyued with prayer, as a choice argument whereby to plead and prevail for new ones. (*Psal.* 44. through the whole) yea though we should not prevail for the time, yet we owe thanks in that he hath been sometimes intreated, and is only delaying now, untill a more fit time, wherein he may give that which is sought, *Psal.* 43. 5. Watch in the same with thanksgiving.

Verf. 3. *Withall, praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the myserie of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:*

4. *That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak,*

He recommendeth one particular unto their prayers, to wit, That they would deal with God for him and other faithfull Ministers; that in that time of persecution chiefly, wherein he was made a prisoner for Truth, they might be indued with a spirit of boldnesse and freedom in the delivery of their message; the subject whereof was most precious, as being a myserie, and a myserie of Christ, and so a most necessary and profitable myserie, v. 3. And that he might be gifted with plainness in preaching, and with all other properties requisite in an able and faithful Preacher, v. 4. *Doct.* 1. Christians are bound to pray for others as well as for themselves, and chiefly for their Ministers, and for every one, as they are lesse or more instrumental in the work of Christ; so Paul, who was much employed in the work of the Gospel, enjoyneth, *Withall, praying also for us.* 2. Those only are fit to pray for others, who are making conscience to pray for themselves: for, the Apostle, having exhorted them, v. 2. to pray indefinitely, (which certainly containeth principally the duty of every man's praying for himself) here subjoyneth, *Withall, and also praying for us.* 3. Whatever a Minister be for abilities and graces, it becometh him well to seek the help of Gods people committed to his charge, for his further inabling to go
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about the duties of his Calling, and especially he is to seek the help of their prayers: for, even *Paul* seeketh this from those *Colossians*; *Withall, praying also for us.* 4. In times of persecution chiefly, a faithful Minister will be more anxious and careful for the thriving of the Gospel, and work of God, than for his own particular interest: If it go well with the Gospel, come of him what will, he is well; So *Paul* (though lying in bonds) urgeth upon them to pray, not so much for his own liberty, as the Gospels; not that the prison doors might be open, but *that God would open to them a door of utterance.* 5. Holy boldnesse and freedom is much to be wished for in a Minister; that so he may speak all seasonable Truths, *Acts* 20. 27. and to all persons, *1 Tim.* 5. 20, 21. and at all times, *2 Tim.* 4. 2. and may speak them as the Truths of God with courage and authority, *1 King.* 22. 14. This holy boldnesse and freedom is meant by the *door of utterance*, as the Apostle himself expoundeth it, *Eph.* 6. 19, 20. *That God would open unto us a door of utterance.* 6. There are many difficulties to be overcome before a man can attain unto this holy boldnesse, and those such, that only God can remove them: There is a difficulty to find out pertinent matter, and to vent it when it is found; partly, through want of courage; partly, through the suspending sometimes of divine influence: and there is a difficulty to vent it rightly; that is, first, confidently, arising either from want of experience, or from an evil conscience. Secondly, pertinently, through want of prudence. Hence *Paul*, speaking of this holy boldnesse, useth the metaphor of a door, and of a door shut until God do open it: *That God would open unto us a door of utterance.* 7. As Christ in his Person, Natures and Offices, and the Gospel, which treateth of those, is a myserie: So Christ and the Gospel should be the main subject of a Ministers preaching: He ought so to preach the Law, and presse duties, as that the due relation betwixt Christ and those may be clearly held forth; Christ being the end of the Law for righteousness, *Rom.* 10. 4. *To speak the myserie of Christ.*

8. Persecution for the Gospel, tendeth to the advantage of the Gospel; the more it is suppressed, the more it groweth. *Paul is in bonds*, and yet he preacheth, *Act. 26. 29.* *Doct. 9.* Then are people chiefly to bear burden with their Ministers by praying to God for them, when they are under persecution for the Gospel: for, *Paul mentioneth his bonds*, as an argument exciting them to pray: *for which I am also in bonds.* 10. It is a great part of a Ministers task, as to preach, so to make what he preacheth, plain unto the people, by dimitting himself in the whole convey of his purpose, for method, (*2 Tim. 2. 15.*) stile, (*1 Cor. 2. 4.*) and close application, (*2 Tim. 4. 2.*) so far as is possible unto the capacity of the meanest; *That I may make it manifest*, saith he. 11. Besides this holy boldnesse and plainnesse, there are many other things which a Minister would advert to in preaching, as that he preach pertinently to the conditions of all, *Isa. 50. 4.* that he speak affectionately and with pity, even to the most stubborn, *Jer. 4. 19.* and patiently, not wearying for want of successe, *2 Tim. 2. 25.* and zealously, with indignation against sin, *Isa. 58. 1.* and frequently, *2 Tim. 4. 2.* and self-deniedly, *2 Cor. 4. 5.* These, and many other things requisite, are all summed up by *Paul* in this comprehensive expression, *As I ought to speak,*

Verf. 5. Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

He exhorteth them to wise and circumspect walking, with relation chiefly to the Heathens among whom they did live, who were without the visible Church; and that in order to this, they should close with every opportunity of doing well, and particularly wherein they might gain any of those Infidels to Christ, though with much losse to themselves in things worldly. *Doct. 1.* It is not sufficient for Christians to pray much, or go about the duties of Gods immediate worship, except they also set about other particular duties of an holy life; So, besides

prayer, he injoyneeth, *walk in wisdom*. 2: There is great wisdom required in a Christians carriage towards those who are without, to wit, unconverted Heathens without the Church; and by proportion those who evidence their non-regeneration by a profane life within the Church, (*Tit. 1. 16.*) lest we skat them from Christ, giving them occasion to speak evill of Religion, *1. Tim. 5. 14.* or we our selves be infected by them, *1 Cor. 5. 6.* *Walk in wisdom towards those who are without.* 3. The losse of credit, riches, ease, or not coming up to the full extent of our christian liberty, and that which is our right in things worldly, is not to be stood upon, rather than we lose the oportunities of doing good, chiefly of gaining a godlesse man to Christ: for, by the losse of these things, we are to *redeem the time*, or, oportunity: It's a Metaphor from Merchants, who prefer the least profit that may be to their pleasures and ease, closely following their businesse, when the merkats are best.

Verf. 6. Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

He directeth them how to order their speech and ordinary conference, so, as it may alwayes carry along with it delectable edification unto the hearers, being seasoned with the salt of holy and divine wisdom, whereby they should acquire ability and prudence to answer pertinently in any thing whereof they should be questioned, chiefly about the grounds of Christianitie. *Do.* We are not left to run at randon in our ordinary discourses, so, as to speak idly, *Matth. 12. 36.* much less profanely, *Eph. 4. 29.* but are at all times, and with all persons, to have an eye to the good of those with whom we speak, so, as both to delight and edifie them by our speech: for, this is to speak *with grace*; see *Ephes. 4. 29. Let your speech be alway with grace.* 2. That our speech may be with grace, and so both delight and edifie the

the hearers; The salt, not of bitter and satyrick jesting, (*Eph. 5. 4.*) but of divine wisdom, is required, that noysome, putrifying, and profane discourse may be eschewed, and what we speak may be so ordered upon an exact survey of time, place and company, as it may prove most savorie and acceptable unto the hearers: for, this is the use of salt, to extract putrifying humors from meats, and make them delicious to the taste, fit for digestion, and good for nourishment; *seasoned with salt.*

4. As Christians should endeavor that measure of knowledge whereby they may be enabled to give a reason of their faith unto those who ask them: So, it is not sufficient to answer materially to that wherein we are questioned, except we answer in the right manner also, that is, confidently, understandingly, reverently and gravely, not jestingly: for, he saith not, *that ye may know with,* but *how to answer.* 5. The habituating of our selves to edifying discourse in our ordinary strain, is a profitable mean for growth in knowledge and the through understanding of those things which we know: for, the fruit to be reaped by speaking *alway with grace,* is, *that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.*

Verf. 7. *All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithfull minister, and fellow-servant in the Lord:*

8. *Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts:*
9. *With Onesimus a faithfull and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here.*

In the second part of the Chapter, the Apostle (having commended Tychicus from the esteem which he had of him, and from his ministerial calling) sheweth, he had sent him to them, to give them certain information concerning his own case, and to return unto him certain information concerning theirs; and that he might prove
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comfortable unto them by his presence, preaching, and otherwayes, v. 7. 8. And joyneth *Onesimus* with him in the Commission, whom he also commendeth as a faithfull Christian, beloved of *Paul*, and, as it would seem, their own countrey-man, v. 9. *Doct. 1.* It concerneth a Minister much to be of a good report among, and well-esteemed of by People; that so the Word may be the more readily received from him: for this cause, *Paul*, being to send *Tychicus* to comfort their hearts, commends him much unto them, as a Christian, whom he himself loved dearly, *who is a beloved brother*; as a Minister who was faithfull for his Master, *a faithfull Minister*; as one, whom *Paul* had associated to himself sometimes as a colleague in the work of the Ministry, *Acts. 20. 4. and fellow-servant in the Lord.* 2. It is good to be rightly informed of the state of those who are sufferers for Christ; that we may accordingly sympathize with them, *Heb. 13. 3.* be preparing for the like sufferings, *Job. 15. 20.* and encouraged by their constancie, *Phil. 1. 14.* for, *Paul* sendeth *Tychicus* to inform them of his case. 3. The carriage of those who suffer for Truth, ought to be such, as they need not be ashamed who should know of it; *Paul* sendeth *Tychicus* to declare all his state unto them. 4. Publick and common reports, especially of things at a distance, are not much to be trusted: A man may easily wrong both himself and others, by being too credulous of such: Hence *Paul* sendeth *Tychicus* to inform them certainly of his case; *All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you*, and *whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose.* 5. It concerneth a Minister prudently to inquire and seek to know the state of those who are committed unto his charge; that he may be thereby directed how to speak to their state: for, *he sendeth Tychicus to know their estate.* 6. The carriage of people ought to be such, as they need not be ashamed that those who are over them in the Lord, come to the knowledge of it: for, *he sendeth Tychicus, that he may know their estate.* 7. A Christian sufferer for Truth, ought not to be so much taken up with his

his own particular concernment, as not to be affected with the tryals and sufferings of others, though possibly they be much lighter than his own; So Paul, though now in bonds, sendeth *Tychicus* to strengthen and comfort those Colossians under their present tryall, from the false teachers; and comfort your hearts. 8. As true grace will bring a man to esteem and credit, chiefly with those who themselves are gracious, and sometimes with others also: for it cutteth off those vices which make men contemptible, and adorneth with the contrary vertues: So, where true grace is, it will make a man reckon interest in all those who have grace, and testifie his affection unto them, whatever hath been their carriage formerly, and notwithstanding of any present disparity which may be among them otherwayes: for, here *Onesimus*, whom many take to be the same who is mentioned in the Epistle to *Philemon*, and so was once a fugitive servant, is now, being converted, intrusted with an honorable Commission, and is owned by this eminent Apostle, as his beloved brother; with *Onesimus a faithful and beloved brother*. 9. Though grace in a person be the main thing which should commend him to us; yet other naturall and civill relations, ought to have their own deserved weight: Grace doth not dissolve such bonds, but rather strengtheneth them; So Paul commendeth *Onesimus* unto them from this, that he was one of them.

Verf. 10. *Aristarchus* my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and *Marcus* sisters sonne to *Barnabas* (touching whom ye received commandments; if he come unto you, receive him)

11. And *Jesus*, which is called *Justus*, who are of the circumcision. These onely are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

Here are salutations sent to the Church at Colosse, by three of those who were in Paul's company, and they are descri-

described, first, severally from their respective names and other adjuncts; next joyntly from their Nation, they were Jews; from their pains in promoting the Gospel; and from their usefulness to Paul himself. *Doct. 1.* Distance of place should not cool those affections of love and good-will, which ought to be among Christians: for, those salutations were outward expressions of their inward love, and they do salute, though at a distance. *2.* As little mercy is to be expected from persecuters; So, the crosse of Christ, and suffering for Truth, is a thing not to be ashamed of: for, Paul, as it were, glorieth in the style of Prisoner, though he was used as a captive slave: *Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner*: the word signifieth, a captive of war. *3.* As reall friendship doth not expire with prosperity; So, the sharpest sufferings of Gods people, have some sweet ingredient in them: for, Paul hath a fellow with him while he is prisoner, even *Aristarchus*, who was his companion in travels, *Acts 19. 29.* and *20. v. 4.* and now doth not quit him in his sufferings: *Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner.* *4.* Such love and respect should be had to those who are faithfull Instruments in the Church of God; that even those who have relation to them, ought to be the more respected, chiefly, if they walk in their steps; So, *Mark* is commended from this, that he was *sisters son to Barnabas*, who was sepatated for the work of God, *Acts 13. 3.* *5.* Notwithstanding a man hath fallen, to the grief and scandall of others; yet, after evidences given of his amendment, he ought to be received and conversed with as formerly; So *Mark*, otherwayes called *John*, did desert Paul and *Barnabas*, *Acts 13. 13.* whereupon arose that hot contention betwixt those two Apostles, *Acts 15. 37.* But now having given proof of his remorse for what he did, he is recommended by Paul to those Colossians: *Touching whom ye have received commandments, if he come unto you, receive him.* *6.* As folk should not follow the multitude of the kinde, from whom they are descended, in an evill course; So this tendeth much to a man's commendation, when he

he breaks off his evill kinde, and is not carryed away with them: for, those three were of the Jews, a people for the most part, enemies to the Gospel, *Rom. 11. 28. who are of the circumcision*, which is mentioned for their commendation, that though they were Jews, yet they had become Christians, and companions of *Paul* under his affliction. 7. There is no way which leadeth to the Kingdom of Glory, but that which is held forth in the Gospel, *Acts 4. 12.* And Christ doth rule in the world by the Gospel, subduing thereby the hearts of men to live by his Laws (*Psal. 110. 3.*) written in the Gospel, *Rom. 2. 16.* and exercising Government and Discipline in his visible Courts, according to the Rules prescribed by the Gospel, *Matth. 18. 17, 18.* Therefore the Gospel in this place is called the Kingdom of God, See *Matth. 4. 23. Mark. 4. 11. Fellow-workers unto the Kingdom of God.* 8. This maketh much unto a man's commendation, when he hath any hand in the promoting of this Kingdom, and especially when his discouragements are many, and encouragements few, from the example of others who should joyn with him in that work, and do it not: for, they are commended from this, that they onely of the circumcision were *Paul's fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God.* 9. It appeareth hence how small ground there is for the Pope's pretended supremacy and head-ship over the Church; the main Pillar whereof, is, that because *Peter* was Bishop at Rome, therefore the Pope must be his successor: now, beside that, they can never prove *Peter* to have been Head of the Church, it is certain that he was not at Rome, when *Paul* wrote this Epistle, there being onely there then those three of the circumcision, who were his fellow-labourers unto the Kingdom of God: Neither is there any word in Scripture to prove, that ever *Peter* was at Rome, but much to the contrary. 10. The most eminent servants of God in time of persecution, have need of comfort, incouragement and up-stirring: so ready are the best to faint in the hour of temptation, *Dan. 11. 35.* but
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God in mercy, doth not suffer them to be destitute of some, who are comfortable and encouraging unto them, when their necessity calleth for it: for, saith he, *Which have been a comfort to me*: The word signifieth, they had been for comfort, counsell or encouragement unto him; which supponeth, that even Paul had need of those sometimes. 11. As most eminent Christians are ready to acknowledge, with thankfulness, how steadable any are made unto them in their suffering case; So it is matter of no small commendation, to be in any measure helpfull, by counsell, advice, encouragement, or comfort unto those who are suffering for Christ, and any part of his Truth: for, herein are those three commended, that they had been a comfort unto Paul, as is acknowledged by himself.

Verf. 12. *Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, alwayes labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect, and compleat in all the will of God.*

Here are salutations directed from *Epaphras*, who is described from his Countrey, his Office of the Ministerie, and his affection to those Colossians, testified by his fervent and constant praying to God for them, that they might be gifted with perseverance in universall, sincere and hearty obedience to the will of God. *Doct. 1. A Minister ought not to omit any duty of civility, tending to keep a good understanding betwixt him and his flock: for, Epaphras, who was their Minister. (chap. i. v. 7.) saluteth them.* 2. The power of a call from God and his People, ought to make a man venture upon apparent inconveniences, which otherwayes he were obliged to eschew: for, *Epaphras* their own Countreyman, had embraced a call to the Ministry among those Colossians; though Christ sheweth, a Minister is in hazard to meet with disrespect in his own Countrey. *Job. 4. 44. Who is one of you.* 3. As it is the duty of a Minister, not only

ly to preach unto, pray with ; but also to pray for his flock, and that alwayes when opportunity offereth : So, an honest Minister, who maketh conscience of this duty in earnest, will finde it to be no easie task , considering how indisposed he is sometimes to pray for himself, *Matth. 26. 40.* and how many in the flock pray not for themselves, *Matth. 13. 47. &c.* and so are an heavy burden unto any who would pray for them ; and how many they are also , concerning whom God will not be intreated, *Matth. 22. 14.* Thus *Epaphras* was alwayes labouring fervently for them in prayer. The word signifieth, to be striving in a battell, and in an ageny for them.

4. A Minister ought not to rest satisfied, that he himself preacheth Truth plainly, or that the people committed to his charge, attain thereby to the knowledge of Truth ; but practice and obedience to the will of God so known, must be added , together with perseverance and constancie in their begun obedience, lest by their falling away, they lose themselves , and disgrace the Truth : for, he prayeth, that they might stand perfect and compleat in all the will of God.

5. It is neither the pains of a Minister, nor resolution of a people, *Rom. 9. 16.* but the power of God, which worketh constancie in the way of holinesse, against the stormy blasts of severall temptations : for, *Epaphras* prayeth unto God for it, that they may stand perfect and compleat in the will of God.

6. Approven obedience to the will of God, and that which is to be aimed at, is that, which is, i. perfect, to wit, with a perfection of parts, or sincere, and not hypocriticall ; that ye may stand perfect. 2. Hearty and willing, the affections being, as it were, filled with, and carried on by the command ; and compleat, or, filled. It's a Metaphor from sails filled with winde. 3. Universall, as having respect unto all the Commandments ; In all the will of God.

Verf. 13. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.

He confirmed by his own testimony, what he presently spoke concerning the zeal, or, fervent and burning care, (for so the word signifieth) which *Epaphras* had of them and their neighbouring Churches. *Doff. 1.* Men in place and eminencie, are bound to give a testimony to the graces and gifts of any whom they know to be deserving; that so the person of whom they testifie, may be in better capacity to do good unto others, with whom such a testimony will have weight: for, *Paul* giveth as it were a testimonial unto *Epaphras*, *I bear him record, &c.* 2. It's a great part of a Minister's commendation, that, he be zealous or fervently carefull for the spirituall good of his flock; So *Paul* beareth record, that *Epaphras* had a great zeal for these *Colossians*, the people of his charge, chap. 1. v. 7. 3. A Minister's zeal ought to be extended towards others of Christ's Members, than those of his proper charge, and chiefly unto those Churches which ly nearest unto him, as being in a neerer capacitie by their good or evill example, to advance or retard the work of God among his own flock: So, *Paul* beareth record, that *Epaphras* had a great zeal for those in *Laodicea*, and *Hierapolis*, which were neighbouring Churches.

Verf. 14. Luke the beloved Physician, and Demas greet you.

Here are some salutations sent from *Luke* and *Demas*. *Doff. 1.* As Christ, when he is about to supply his Church with a Ministry, will take men of any calling, whom he pleaseth to choose, and make them Ministers: So, worldly advantage is not to be stood upon when Christ calleth: for, *Luke*, the same, as it seemeth, who wrote the Gospel, was before a Physician, and had now become

become a Minister; though his former calling would have advantaged him more; chiefly at those times when Civill Authority did allow no maintenance for Ministers: *Luke the beloved Physician*. 2. Men in place chiefly, should lay out their love and respect so wisely, that it may tend to a man's commendation to be respected by them, as being known to lay out their affection upon none but such as are worthy of it; So *Paul* calleth *Luke*, beloved, to wit, by him, that hereby he may commend him to them; *Luke the beloved Physician*. 3. There are many fair Professors within the Visible Church, who may afterwards turn Apostate, who so long as they keep the mask of a Profession, will not be behind with the best in externall duties, yea, and often do out-strip others: for, this *Demas*, (whom many take to be the same who is spoken of, *2 Tim. 4. 10.* to have turned Apostate, and as some write, an Idolatrous Priest) is here among the first in saluting those Colossians: And *Demas greets you*. 4. Though judicious Ministers may have their own fears, concerning such fore-mentioned Professors; yet so long as they continue in the externall duties of Christianity, they ought to give unto them that outward respect which is given unto others: but withall, Ministers would be sparing to ingage much in the commendation of any, whom they have ground to suspect will prove such, untill time try what they are: for, *Paul* writeth the salutation of *Demas* among the rest, though it is like he had his own fears concerning him; for, he commendeth him not as he did the rest; And *Demas greets you*.

VER. 15. Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea; and Nymphas, and the Church which is in his house.

The Apostle directs them to salute in his name, the Christians at Laodicea, that so they might be prepared to hear this Epistle with greater attention: And above all the rest he saluteth one. *Nymphas* (a man eminent for

piety) and the Church at his house; whereby may be meant both a Congregation of Christians, to whom he had given his house for a place of publick assembling to Divine Worship; As also, his own Family, who were piously instructed, and orderly governed, as if they had been a Church. *Doct. 1.* People are not so to make use of the respect and affection which a publick Minister carryeth unto them, as to make others equally deserv- ing, jealous of him, as if he did carry no such respect unto them: for, the Apostle imployeth those Colossians, to salute in his name the brethren which were in Laodicea, as if he had said, Let them know, I carry the same respect unto them, which I carry unto you. 2. However a Minister be eyed to respect all the Members of the Church, and to evidence so much, by discharging all common duties towards them; yet he is bound to put some more respect upon those who are more eminent for piety among them; that so by his countenancing the appearances of piety, he may make it the more desirable and lovely: for, *Paul salutes Nymphas* in particular. 3. As the Primitive Church had not the countenance of Civill Authoritie to provide, upon the Publick expence, places for the Congregation to meet, and publick maintenance for Ministers; So, such was the fervor of love to the Gospel then, that private Christians did contribute largely and freely for the up-holding of it: Charity did move to give more then, than force of Law can now: for, *Nymphas* gives his house to be a publick Place of meeting for the Church: and the Church at his house. 4. Masters of Families should so train up their household, in the exercise of Divine Worship, and in a godly conversation, by instructing the ignorant, *1. Cor. 14. 35.* rebuking and censuring the disobedient and profane, *Psal. 101. 7.* and by discharging all duties of worship, competent to the Master of a Family, and causing his Family to joyn with him, *Isa. 24. -- 15.* that they may deserve the name of a Church: So much is imported by those

those words, *the Church at his house*, as they contain a designation of his Family.

Verf. 16. *And when this Epistle is read amongst you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the Epistle from Laodicea.*

He directeth them, that, after they have read this Epistle themselves, they would cause it be read in the Church of the Laodiceans, who, being their neighbours, were infested with the same errors; And that some other Epistle, written from Laodicea, either from the whole Church, or from their Ministers, as it seemeth unto Paul, informing him of their case, should be read by the Colossians, for better clearing of some passages in this Epistle. *Doff. 1.* As Scripture is to be read and perused even by private Christians; so, the doctrine contained in Scripture, even that which is expressly directed to some particular Churches or persons, is of universall use unto all others: Thus they are commanded, having read this Epistle themselves, to cause read it in the Church of Laodicea, as being usefull for them also. *2.* The helps of other mens writings, may, and should be made use of for the better understanding of Scripture: for, this Epistle from Laodicea, was not written by Paul himself, who had never been there, chap. 2. v. 1. but by the Laodiceans themselves: and Paul will have it read for the further clearing of this Epistle, which was written by himselfe: *And that ye likewise read the Epistle from Laodicea.*

Verf. 17. *And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministerie which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it.*

He directeth them to admonish their Minister Archippus, (who in the absence of his Colleague Epaphras had the more burden, and it seemeth, had fallen somewhat

slack) both to consider the nature and weight of the Ministeriall charge with which he was intrusted by Christ, and that he would faithfully discharge all the parts of it. *Doct. 1.* There is no ground from this Scripture, for placing a power of Jurisdiction in People over their Ministers, to call them to a judiciall account, and to inflict the censures of the Church upon them: for, all that is here said, inferreth no more than an admonition from charity, which any private Christian might have given to their Minister; and not an authoritative censure or rebuke: Paul speaketh otherwayes, when he would establish any power of that kinde; As *1 Tim. 6. 17. Charge them that are rich, &c.* but here onely, *Say unto Archippus.* 2. As the best of Ministers are ready to fall slack in their duty, and have need of up-stirring, they have so much to do, *2 Cor. 2. 16.* and for the most part see so small fruits of what they do, *Isai. 49. 4.* So it is the duty of people to have an eye upon their Minister, how he dischargeth his Office, and when they see a fault in him, to tell himself of it, admonishing him for it: but withall, they would do this in love, and so, as they may evidence all due respect, both to his Person and Function: for, he directeth them to *Say unto Archippus, take heed to thy ministry,* and not back-bite or rail upon Archippus. 3. That a man may conscientiously go about his calling, he would know the nature of such a Charge, and what it requireth; Particularly a Minister would know; First, that his Calling is a Ministry, a laborious service, or a working, as it were, through dust and myre: for, so the word signifieth. And secondly, that however the designation of the person unto the Ministry be from man, *Acts 6. 3.* and *14. 23.* yet the Office it self is from Jesus Christ, to whom he must be countable for his carriage in it: for, saith he, *Say unto Archippus, take heed to thy ministry, which thou hast received in the Lord.* *Doct. 4.* It is not sufficient for any man, chiefly for a Minister, to know the nature of his Calling, and what it doth require, unlesse also he make

conscience to discharge it when it is known, and to discharge all the parts of it, that so he may fulfill it; *that thou fulfill it*: so were they to say to *Archippus*.

Verf. 18. *The salutation by the hand of me Paul, Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.*

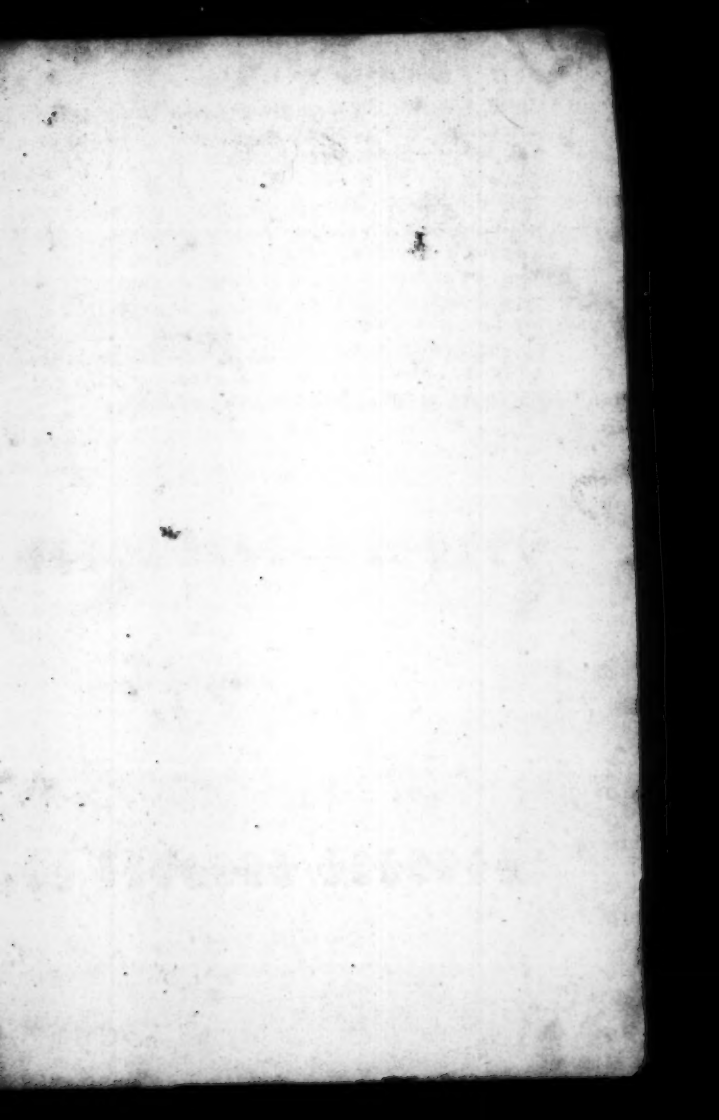
This verse containeth the conclusion of the Epistle, which he sheweth, was written with his own hand, and not by a Secretary, as the rest of the Epistle was: And in it, having saluted them, he craveth, they would remember his bonds, and wisheth unto them God's grace and favour, with all spirituall benefits flowing from it. *Doct. 1.* Satan's malice, and man's impudence, did come to that height, even while the Apostles themselves were alive, as to endeavour the corrupting of Scripture, by calling that Scripture which was not: for, to prevent such impostures, Paul writeth the salutation with his own hand, that the Epistle may be known to be his, 2 *Thess.* 3. 17. *The salutation by the hand of me Paul.* 2. God hath sufficiently provided in his Word, against the fore-mentioned evill, by putting such marks upon Scripture, as may be a clear difference betwixt it and all humane writings; Paul's own hand-writing did serve for such a mark in his Epistles; *The salutation by the hand of me Paul*: And though this mark doth not extend unto all Scripture, neither can it give faith now, the first Copy of his Epistles being lost; yet there are other marks or arguments taken from Scripture, whereby it doth sufficiently evidence it self to be the Word of God, as the consent of all its parts, though written at diverse times, and by severall hands; the fulfilling of its prophecies; the majestie and simplicity of the style; the power of its doctrine, &c. 3. As the most eminent servants of Christ may be put to personall sufferings for Truth; So, it is the duty of all Christians to remember them under their sufferings, so as to pray to God for them, v. 2, 3. to see the worth of Truth,

for which they suffer, in their resolute under-going of the cross; and suffering for it, *Act. 21. 13.* so as to fore-arm themselves for the like sufferings, *Job. 15. 20.* and to supply them also in their outward necessities, *Phil. 4. 14.* In order to all those, it seemeth, Paul hath desired them to remember his bonds. 4. Though Christians may use an ordinary form of words in saluting of, and expressing their best wishes unto those with whom they converse; yet they ought to be reall, and not formall only in using of it, as understanding what they wish, and being affectionate and sincere in their wish; for, Paul doth affix his Amen unto his ordinary farewell wish: *Grace be with you. Amen.*



F I N I S.







A BRIEF
EXPOSITION
OF
The EPISTLES of PAUL
TO THE
PHILIPPIANS
AND
COLOSSIANS.

By JAMES FERGUSSON,
Minister at Kilwinning.

1 Tim. 3. 16.

*And without controversie, great is the mysterie of god-
liness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in
the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the Gen-
tiles, believed on in the world, received up into
glory.*

John 17. 3.

*And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee
the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou
hast sent.*

L O N D O N :
Printed for the Company of STATIONERS,
Anno Dom. 1656.

might teach and admonish them by it. Thirdly, in relation to God, they might take matter for spiritual praise unto him from it. *Dock. 1.* Ministers should excite people to the diligent study of Scripture: and people ought to be diligent in the study of it, so as they may become familiar with it, and it may sink down through the ear and brain to the heart, and reside in it, being fixed there by frequent reading, hearing, meditating upon, *Psal. 1. 2.* and conferring about it, *Pf. 119. 46.* whereby also they may attain to a copious measure of the knowledge of it: for, saith he, *Let the word of Christ*, that is, chiefly the Gospel, *Heb. 2. 3.* not excluding other Scriptures: (for the Prophets were inspired by the Spirit of Christ, *1 Pet. 3. 19* and did also write of Christ, *Job. 5. 39.* So that whole Scripture is the word of Christ:) *and let it dwell in you:* it's a metaphor which speaketh inward receiving of it, and familiar conversing with it; *and let it dwell richly,* or, copiously, *in you.* 2. There is that in Scripture, which is sufficient to make a man compleatly wise unto salvation, as containing all things necessary to be believed, or practised, *2 Tim. 3. 15.* for, this is the first fruit to be reaped by the study of Scripture, it affordeth all wisdom; *In all wisdom.* 3. It is not only the duty of Ministers, but also of private Christians, keeping themselves within their station, and not usurping upon the Ministerial Calling, (*Rom. 10. 15.*) privately to teach and instruct, as also to admonish, and reprove one another: and the knowledge and wisdom which they draw from Scripture, is to be employed for this end, next after the advancing of their own salvation, and not for vain ostentation, profane jesting, or idle jangling, *1 Tim. 1. 4. 6.* *In all wisdom, teaching and admonishing.* 4. The duties of teaching and admonishing among private Christians, ought to be mutual; there being none so compleat for knowledge, so streight in his practice, but he standeth in need to have those duties performed sometimes to him by others; *admonishing one another.* 5. Singing to God with the voice, is a profitable Ordinance of Gods Worship

ship under the Gospel ; as not only holding forth that which the Word read doth, but also staying the heart upon the sweet and lively meditation of the matter which we sing, and is most natively directed to the glorifying of God, as its proper and immediate scope : *singing, &c.* 6. The Psalms of *David*, and other scriptural Songs in the in the old Testament, may, and ought to be sung in this part of Gospel-worship : for, saith he, in *psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing, &c.* or rather, *singing in psalms, hymns, &c.* for so the words may be rendered : now all agree that hereby are designed the Psalms of *David*, and other scriptural Songs, though there be some difference about the kind of Songs, which are intended to be expressed by every one of those in particular. 7. That this piece of Gospel-worship may be gone about acceptably, First, Our Songs would be spiritual, and this not only for the matter, but because of the assistance of Gods Spirit, and of a spiritual frame of heart which is required for singing aright, *Eph. 5. 18, 19.* Secondly, They would carry with them a kind of delectable edification to the hearers, as being sung with grave and melodious tones, and so, as the matter which is sung may be understood by others, *1 Cor. 14. 15.* This is *to sing with grace*, or, in a delicious and edifying strain, so is the word taken, chap. 4. v. 6. Thirdly, Except the heart and inward affection be stirring in this duty ; the outward grace, and delectation, which is in it, serveth for no purpose : *singing in your hearts.* Fourthly, In singing, the heart ought to be taken up immediately with the thoughts of praise unto God, arising from the consideration of the matter, which will alwayes furnish a heart rightly disposed with some thoughts of that kind : *singing in your hearts to the Lord.*

Verf. 17. *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

He giveth a common rule for all our actions, that they be

undertaken in Christ's Name, and that thanks be given to God the Father through Christ for the event or successe of them. *Doct. 1.* Christians are not left to their liberty, neither in things necessary, nor yet altogether in things of their own nature indifferent, neither in their words nor deeds, nor yet their thoughts (for those are deeds or actions of the mind and inward man) to do as they please in them; but are tied to walk by a rule: and particularly they are to be ruled by Christ's command, with in-calling of his help, and aiming at his glory in what they do; for, *doing in his Name*, importeth all those three, *Matth. 18. 20. Luke 10. 17. Psal. 31. 3.* and however it be impossible to have an actual purpose to glorifie him, and imploy his help actually for every thought, word and deed; yet the heart would be habitually inclined to do all things in his strength, and for him; and in solemn and weighty actions there ought to be an actual purpose of this kind; *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus.* 2. They who do all things in Christ's Name, will have still abundant matter of thanksgiving to God in the close of their action, whatever be the event; *do all things in the Name, &c. giving thanks.* 3. We ought to acknowledge thankfully our obligation to God for the successe and event of our lawful undertakings, Not sacrificing to our own net, or burning incense to our own drag, *Hab. 1. 16. Giving thanks to God, and the Father, or God, who is the Father:* (see upon chap. 1. ver. 3.) which excludeth not the other two persons; but the Father being the fountain of the Deity, from whom, as the prime author, all good things are derived to us, by mediation of the Son, the holy Spirit working them in us: Therefore, that the order both of nature, and of operation may be pointed at, for the most part we expresse the Father both in our prayers and praises, not excluding the other two persons. 4. There is no address to the Father in any duty whether of prayer or praise, so, as to be born through, or accepted in it, but through Jesus Christ: *giving thanks to God, and the Father by him.* Ver.

Verf. 18. *Wives, submit your selves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.*

In the second part of the chapter, from this verse to the end, he treateth of these duties which relate to Christians, as they are members of a family; and as there are in every compleat family three pairs, to wit, Husband and Wife, Parents and Children, Masters and Servants; whereof the latter is alwayes inferiour to the former: so he points at the duty of each of those, and still beginneth with the inferiour first, because their duty, through the subjection which is in it, is more difficile, and being made conscience of, is a strong motive unto the superiour to go about his duty also: and first he presseth upon wives their duty, to wit, subjection to their husbands, from the conveniency of it; and qualifyeth their subjection, that it be *in the Lord*. *Doct. 1.* It is not sufficient for Christians to go about general and common duties of Christianity, but those other duties which belong to them as being in such a state of life, to wit, as **Magistrates, Ministers, Husbands, Wives, &c.** must be in a special manner made conscience of: for, the Apostle having exhorted unto those common vertues, doth now presse such duties as concern Christians in their particular vocations: *Wives, submit your selves, &c.* *2.* It is much for the advantage of Religion, that particular families be well ordered, the whole Church being made up of those; hence he presseth much those duties which belong unto Christians, as they are members of families; *Wives, submit your selves, &c.* *3.* The sum of a Wives duty unto her Husband, is, subjection, which comprehendeth a reverend esteem of him, *Eph. 5. 33.* respective speaking of him, and to him, *1 Pet. 3. 6.* and obedience to him in things lawful, *1 Pet. 3. 5, 6.* *Wives, submit, or, subjeet your selves.* *4.* However a womans own husband may come far short of others in parts, gifts, and every other thing which deserveth reverence and subjection, *1 Sam.*

25. 17. yet because of the Ordinance of God, and that peace may be kept betwixt man & wife, she is to submit to her own husband, respecting none so much as him, depending upon none, and following the counsel and direction of none so much as his; for so the Apostle commands, *Submit unto your own husbands.* 5. Whether we consider the Ordinance of God injoyning, or the infirmity of the woman, as being of the weaker sex, or the great inconveniency of jealousy, hatred and strife which followeth upon the denying of this subjection, it will be found most convenient, equitable and just, that *wives be subject unto their husbands, as it is fit.* 6. The subjection which a wife doth owe unto her husband, is in the Lord Christ, so that in the first place she is to subject her self to Christ, and from love unto him, to subject her self to her husband; whence it will follow, that she is to obey him only in things lawful, and to look upon her subjection as service done unto Christ, which may give her comfort against an unkind return from her husband; for, he saith, *as it is fit in the Lord.*

Vers. 19. *Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.*

He exhorteth husbands to love their wives, as the sum and fountain of all other duties which they owe unto them, and forbiddeth bitterness towards them. *Dott. 1.* As the Lord hath not tied inferiours to their duty, leaving superiours at liberty to do what they will in theirs; So the mutual discharge of duty betwixt superiours and inferiours, man and wife, parent and children, master and servant, is a great encouragement for every one to set about their own duty, as having not only the command of God for it, but an answerable return from those to whom they do that duty; hence, having pressed upon wives their duty, he doth the like unto the husbands, and so in the rest: *Husbands, love your wives.* 2. The sum of an husbands duty towards his wife, is, to love her: there ought

ought to be love in affection, and that most ardent, *Eph.* 5. 25. and love kything in its effects, so as that he delight to dwell with her, *Pro.* 5. 18, 19. so, as that he lovingly direct and instruct her, *1 Cor.* 14. 35. and so, as he provide for her in all things according to his power, which either her necessity, or dignity of her rank doth call for, *1 Tim.* 5. 8. *Husbands, love your wives.* 3. Bitternesse in husbands towards their wives is a sin to be eschewed much: he is to eschew bitternesse in his affections, so as not to hate her, or cold-risely to love her, *Eph.* 5. 29. bitternesse in words, so as not for light causes to upbraid her, or speak contumeliously of her, *Pro.* 5. 18. And most of all, bitternesse in deeds, which consists in giving her little or no trust in the family, *Pro.* 31. 15. and with-holding from her things necessary for her supply, *1 Tim.* 5. 8. and in beating her, which is contrary both to the Law of God (*Eph.* 5. -29.) and Nature, so that very Heathens did abhor it: *be not bitter against them.* It's a word taken from unsavory meats, pointing that his conversation in all things should be delicious, sweet, and meek.

Verf. 20. *Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is wel-pleasing unto the Lord.*

He commandeth children (under which, according to the Scripture-phrafe, are comprehended sons and daughters in law, &c. *Ruth* 1. 11, 12.) *to obey their parents in all things*, to wit, which are not forbidden by God; and that because hereby they do acceptable service to God. *Doct.* 1. The sum of childrens duty towards their parents, is obedience: the Greek word signifieth obedience flowing from inward respect and reverence, which is to be testified by reverent speaking of them, and to them, *Pro.* 30. 17. by giving obedience to their just commands, and by thankful recompensing of them, chiefly if they fall in straits, *1 Tim.* 5. 4. *Children, obey your parents.* 2. Age, or length of days doth not exempt children from this duty: Children indeed, who are foris-familiate, are not tied

tied to cohabit with parents, and to care for their affairs according to their direction, *Gen. 2. 24.* (which children under the care of parents are tied unto, as being members of the family, *Gen. 37. 12, 13.*) but they are bound to reverence their parents, and be thankful to them as their necessity requires: for, the word rendered *Children*, signifieth all who are begotten, whatever be their age: *Children, obey your parents.* 3. The obedience which children owe to parents is of very large extent, even to *all things*, to wit, not forbidden of God, *Eph. 6. 1.* which limitation is insinuated here in the reason of the command, *for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord*: but it extendeth to all other things; as, if the thing commanded be good, or in its own nature indifferent; yea, even their rigid and seemingly unreasonable commands in things indifferent, are not to be disobeyed, (*Gen. 22. 6.*) if they cannot be otherwise diverted: *Obey your parents in all things.* 4. As obedience to parents is very acceptable to God: for, it's injoynd in the first Command with promise, and in the second Table, *Eph. 6. 2.* So, that children may obey their parents aright, it is necessary that their hearts be touched with some reverence towards God, and a desire to please him, which will make them endeavour to please their parents in God, and thereby do service to God: The argument used to inforce obedience, beareth this much; *for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.*

Verf. 21. *Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.*

Because parents are apt to abuse their parental authority, and chiefly the fathers, Therefore he injoyneth them to use it moderately, not irritating their children lest they turn heartlesse and discouraged. *Doff. 1.* Fathers are so to use their authority over their children, as not to give them just cause of irritation, whether by denying unto them that which is their due in food, raiment, or means of education, *1 Tim. 5. 8.* or by commanding things in themselves unjust, *1 Sam. 20. 31, 34.* or by unjust and rigorous

rigorous commands about things in their own nature indifferent, or inveighing with bitter words against them, chiefly when there is no cause, 1 Sam. 20. 30. and lastly, by beating them either unjustly, when there is no fault; or immoderately, when there is a fault (for just and moderate correction is necessary, Pro. 13. 24.) *Fathers, provoke not your children to anger.* 2. As parents by too much indulgence towards children make them sluggish, petulant, or prophane, Pro. 29. 15. So by their immoderate severity, they make them dull to action, heartlesse and discouraged, from whence do flow sicknesses, and death; yea, and sometimes desperate contumacy: the consideration whereof should make parents deal more gently with them, though they are alwayes to keep up their fatherly authority: for, this is given as a reason of the prohibition, *lest they be discouraged.*

Verf. 22. *Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God.*

He entereth here upon the duty of servants, whereon he insisteth, not only because their condition was most hard, as being for the most part bought slaves; but also, it seemeth severals of them, under pretence of Christian Liberty, did shake off the yoke, their masters being unconverted Pagans; whereby Satan did labour to make the Gospel odious: Therefore Paul exhorteth them to obey their masters (who had power over their flesh and bodies) in all things lawfull: and that not only when their masters were present, as labouring meerly to please them, but in sincerity of heart, as fearing the all-seeing eye of God. *Doff.* 1. The freedom purchased by Christ, and offered in the Gospel, is spiritual, to wit, from the condemning power of the Law, Gal. 3. 13. from the dominion of sin, Rom. 6. 18. and the legal ceremonies, Gal. 2. 4. But it is not bodily: the Gospel doth not meddle with a mans outward estate; as it findes him, whether master

Master or Servant, so it leaves him. *1 Cor. 7. 21.* for some of those Colossians were Servants before conversion, and they remain so after conversion: *Servants, &c.* 2. The dominion which Masters have over Servants, is onely in things temporall, and of the flesh; it is not over the conscience; in which respect there is onely one Lord and Master, *Matth. 23. 8.* and Law-giver, *James 4. 12.* for, they are called *masters according to the flesh*, to denote the extent of their mastership. 3. As the sum of those duties, which servants owe to their masters is, obedience, which supponeth respect and reverence: So, this obedience is of large extent, to wit, to all things not forbidden of God, even their rigid commands are not to be contemned, *1 Pet. 2. 18. obey in all things your masters.* 4. When servants seem respective to their masters person, and carefull of what concerneth him, himself being present; or, when they know the thing which they do, will come otherwayes to his knowledge, but at other times are unfaithfull or carelesse, this is a sin much to be condemned, as evidencing they seek no more but humane approbation, so as if they can get the eyes of men sylored, they regard not the anger of God: for, this is *eye-service* here condemned and he calleth those who are guilty of it, *men-pleasers*: *Not with eye-service as men-pleasers.* 5. Servants ought to serve their Master, and to minde his businesse in *singlenesse of heart*, that is, whether their master be present or absent; whether their actions come to his knowledge or not, they may be alwayes most seriously affected towards the thriving of his affairs: *In singlenesse of heart.* 6. It is onely the impression of the awe and fear of God upon the heart, which will make a servant minde his masters businesse thus: Service in singlenesse of heart, is not to be expected from wicked servants, destitute of the fear of God: *but in singlenesse of heart, fearing God.*

Verf. 23. *And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men :*

He qualifyeth the obedience required, that it be hearty and willing, without grudging : because therein they ought to eye God, more than man : for, the negative particle doth not deny simply, but comparatively ; so that *as to the Lord, and not to men*, is, to the Lord more than to men, as *Mark 9. 37. Doct. 1.* Servants should do their service willingly, carefully, readily and pleasantly ; for then do they it from the heart, otherwayes it's neither acceptable to God, nor men : for, though man do not see the heart, yet heart-unwillingnesse doth kyth in a backward and unpleasant carriage ; *Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily.* 2. Servants should so go about their duty to men, as therein to look unto God, more than man, by doing it, because God commandeth it, and in the way wherein he doth command it, and in making conscience of their duty to man out of conscience to God, even when masters fail in theirs, *1 Pet. 2. 18, 19.* And except servants eye God thus, they have but small encouragement otherwayes to do their duty heartily : for he commandeth them to *do as unto the Lord, and not unto men*, in order to make them do heartily.

Verf. 24. *Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance : for ye serve the Lord Christ.*

That he may excite servants to their duty, he useth some arguments : the first taken from that free retribution of the heavenly Inheritance, which Christ shall give unto those who serve him in their calling, and to believing servants among the rest. *Doct. 1.* There is no calling so mean or base, which is lawfull, and piously gone about, wherein a rich reward is not to be expected from God ; even *Servants shall receive the reward.* 2. So poor

poor is the reward which servants have to expect from their Masters, and what is promised, is often so slightly payed, that for their encouragement, they would cast their eye frequently upon the reward of this heavenly Inheritance: for, the Apostle holdeth it out to be eyed by them, while he saith, *of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance.* 3. In Heaven there is no distinction of servants and sons: all are children and heirs who are there; even servants *shall receive the inheritance* of sons.

4. Whatever reward is promised to any work of ours, it proceedeth not from the worth which is in the work, but from God's free grace, who freely promiseth; for, *it's the reward of an inheritance*; the word signifieth, an inheritance obtained by lot, wherein least of man is seen.

5. Promises have no influence to excite unto duty, except the truth of them be known and believed: divine Truths are looked upon by many as fancies; hence there is so much preaching of them, and so little wrought by them: *Knowing that of the Lord.* 6. As Christ will have none to serve him for nothing: so, the meanest service that is, being done with the right qualifications, is service done to Christ: for, so speaketh he here of servants; *ye serve the Lord Christ*, and hereby assureth them of the reward.

Vers. 25. *But he that doth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.*

Here is a second argument taken from Gods judgment to come, whether upon Masters or Servants who do wrong, confirmed from this, that God is no acceptor of persons. *Doct. 1.* Hope of reward is not sufficient to draw men to their duty, except they be also driven to it by the fear of punishment: for, so much is grounded upon those words, as they speak to Servants, to whom the promise was but presently proponed; *but he that doth wrong, shall receive.* 2. So just is God, that he will not passe by those,

those wrongs which are least thought of by men : such are the mutuall injuries of Masters and Servants : for he, whether Master or Servant, *that doth wrong, shall receive for the wrong.* 3. The Lord keepeth a proportion betwixt sins and strokes, so that the more wrong a man doth, the sorer shall his punishment be, *Heb. 10. 29. for he shall receive his wrong,* that is, a just retribution according to his wrong. 4. It is usuall for people to conceit of somewhat in themselves, for respect to which they will not be so dealt with by God, as others, though they be alike guilty; some do thus conceit of their riches, some of their poverty, some of their parts : see *doct. 1.* upon v. 11. For, his vindicating God from having any such respect to persons, imports, that it is usuall for men to have contrary thoughts of him. 5. There is no such respect of persons with God; he will spare none for outward respects, as being free of all those base passions, which make men wrest judgement for respect to persons : he seareth not the great, he is not preposterously compassionate towards the poor, he coveteth not the gold of the rich, and hath no interest divided from that of eternity and justice, *Genes. 18. 25.* So that *with God* there neither is, nor can be *respect of persons.*

CHAP. I V.

IN the first part of this Chapter, the Apostle (having set down the duty of masters towards servants, v. 1.) exhorteth those Colossians unto severall duties, as to prayer, v. 2. and to pray for himself in particular, v. 3, 4. and to circumspect walking towards Heathens, v. 5. and to aim at delectable edification in their discourse, v. 6.

In the second part he declareth, why he sent *Tychicus* and

and *Onesimus* unto them, whom he highly commendeth, v. 7, 8, 9.

In the third part, are, first, salutations, whereof some were sent to the *Colossians* from three of the *Circumcision*, who are described, and commended, v. 10, 11. some from their own Minister *Epaphras*, whom he highly commendeth, v. 12, 13. some from *Luke* and *Demas*, v. 14. and the rest from *Paul* himself to the *Laodiceans*, v. 15. And secondly, some directions unto them for use-making of this Epistle, v. 16. and that they would admonish their Minister, v. 17. and so he puts a close to the Epistle, v. 18.

Verf. 1. Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equall, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

THis verse seemeth to be a part of the preceding Chapter, whether we look to the purpose which goeth before, or to that which doth follow; wherein he exhorts masters to give unto their servants that which they were obliged, whether by strict Law and condition, or by the Law of charity and christian meeknesse; and that, because they had a Master in Heaven, who would reckon with them if they did otherwayes. *Doct 1.* Masters ought to give unto their servants that which is just, that is, what they are tyed unto by the rule of strict justice; as first, food competent to their service and state, *Prov. 31. 15.* Secondly, their hire, *James 5. 4.* And thirdly, work, wherein they are not to presse them rigorously, and above their power, *Prov. 12. 10.* nor yet suffer them to be altogether idle, *Prov. 29. 21.* for, saith he, *Masters, give unto your servants that which is just.* *Doct. 2.* They are also bound to give unto them that which is equall, that is, what they are tyed unto by the rule of charity and christian meeknesse; as first, to see that they serve God, which is injoynd to Masters in the fourth Command. Secondly, not to do all with them by boast and

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terror, as if they were beasts; but to draw them on with meeknesse, as being of the same nature with themselves; *Eph. 6. 9.* Thirdly, not to be tyrannicall, by making their will an absolute rule for them; but to hear them when in modestie they produce reason to the contrary, *Job 31. 13, 14.* Fourthly, to have respect unto their infirmities, by caring for them when they are sick, *Matth. 8. 6.* Yea, and fifthly, to let somewhat fall beyond condition unto those who are faithfull, *Prov. 14. 35.* *Give unto your servants that which is equall.* Doct. 3. A right to Heaven and the heavenly Inheritance, ought not to prejudge a man in what is due unto him of things worldly: A right unto the one, doth not enervate, but rather establisheth their right unto the other; and so they may without offence seek and plead for what is due unto them: Thus notwithstanding that Heaven is promised (chap. 3. v. 24.) to godly servants, yet masters are commanded to give them that which is just and equall. * 4. The greater that men are in the world, they stand in more need to have the terror of God presented unto them, that thereby they may be excited to their duty: for, as he proponed a comfortable promise unto the poor servants, (chap. 3. v. 24.) so he boasteth masters with the consideration of God's greatnesse, *knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.* 5. Superiors and masters should so carry themselves, as remembring they have one above them to call them to an accompt; *knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.* 6. We would so represent God unto our selves; as may serve best to restrain from sin, and put us upon our duty: for, to inforce the exhortation, he proponeth God unto them, as their *master in heaven*, which speaketh his absolute dominion, *2 Chron. 20. 6.* his omniscience, *Psal. 111. 4.* his holinesse, *Isai. 57. 15.* and his omnipotency, *Psal. 115. 3.* So that their sin could not be hid from him; his holy nature did hate it, he had both right and power to punish it: *ye also have a Master in heaven.*

Verf. 2. *Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.*

He exhorteth unto the exercise of prayer, and to some conditions required for the right discharging of this duty. As first, Instant and vehement persevering in it. Secondly, Watchfulnesse and fervency. Thirdly, Thankfulnesse. *Doff. 1.* The exercise of prayer is necessary for the right performance of commanded duties; it being a mean, in the use whereof, covenanted strength and influence is conveyed unto us, *Matth. 7. 7.* without which we can do nothing: for, unto the former exhortations, he subjoyneth, *Continue in prayer.* 2. We ought to continue and persevere in this exercise, opposing all tentations mightily which tend to make us quite it; *Continue in prayer.* The word signifieth to continue with strength, so as no labour or toil do make us weary, or give it over. Which continuance relateth first to the disposition of the heart, being still kept in a finessse to go about that duty, when occasion offereth; and next to the actual exercise it self, that it be sometimes every day at least gone about, and alwayes, when there is oportunity, though we are not to quite all other duties, that we may be wholly, constantly, and only in this, see *2 Sam. 9. 13.* *Doff. 3.* That this exercise of prayer be discharged aright, watchfulnesse is required, a watchfulnesse especially of the mind; & this first, before we come to the duty, watching for an opportunity of praying, searching out and observing those things which may furnish matter for prayer, as Gods mercies, and our own escapes. Secondly, in the duty, that we be intent upon it, our graces kept in exercise while we are at it, and what is Gods dealing with the soul in it may be observed, as if he straiten, give liberty, hide his face, or shew himself gracious. Thirdly, after the duty, as what answers we receive; and lest we be overtaken either with pride for doing well, or with discouragement for our coming short; *And watch in the same.*

4. Thanksgiving for favours already received, ought to be joyned with prayer, as a choice argument whereby to plead and prevail for new ones, (*Psal. 44.* through the whole) yea though we should not prevail for the time, yet we owe thanks in that he hath been sometimes intreated, and is only delaying now, untill a more fit time, wherein he may give that which is sought, *Psal. 43. 5.* Watch in the same with thanksgiving.

Verf. 3. *Withall, praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the myserie of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:*

4. *That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.*

He recommendeth one particular unto their prayers, to wit, That they would deal with God for him and other faithfull Ministers; that in that time of persecution chiefly, wherein he was made a prisoner for Truth, they might be indued with a spirit of boldnesse and freedom in the delivery of their message; the subject whereof was most precious, as being a myserie, and a myserie of Christ, and so a most necessary and profitable myserie, v. 3. And that he might be gifted with plainnesse in preaching, and with all other properties requisite in an able and faithful Preacher, v. 4. *Dock. 1.* Christians are bound to pray for others aswell as for themselves, and chiefly for their Ministers, and for every one, as they are lesse or more instrumental in the work of Christ; so Paul, who was much employed in the work of the Gospel, enjoyneth, *Withall, praying also for us.* 2. Those only are fit to pray for others, who are making conscience to pray for themselves: for, the Apostle, having exhorted them, v. 2. to pray indefinitely, (which certainly containeth principally the duty of every man's praying for himself) here subjoyneth, *Withall, and also praying for us.* 3. Whatever a Minister be for abilities and graces, it becometh him well to seek the help of Gods people committed to his charge, for his further inabling to go

about the duties of his Calling, and especially he is to seek the help of their prayers: for, even *Paul* seeketh this from those *Colossians*; *Withall, praying also for us.* 4. In times of persecution chiefly, a faithful Minister will be more anxious and careful for the thriving of the Gospel, and work of God, than for his own particular interest: If it go well with the Gospel, come of him what will, he is well; So *Paul* (though lying in bonds) urgeth upon them to pray, not so much for his own liberty, as the Gospels; not that the prison doors might be open, but *that God would open to them a door of utterance.* 5. Holy boldnesse and freedom is much to be wished for in a Minister; that so he may speak all seasonable Truths, *Acts* 20. 27. and to all persons, *1 Tim.* 5. 20, 21. and at all times, *2 Tim.* 4. 2. and may speak them as the Truths of God with courage and authority, *1 King.* 22. 14. This holy boldnesse and freedom is meant by the *door of utterance*, as the Apostle himself expoundeth it, *Eph.* 6. 19, 20. *That God would open unto us a door of utterance.* 6. There are many difficulties to be overcome before a man can attain unto this holy boldnesse, and those such, that only God can remove them: There is a difficulty to find out pertinent matter, and to vent it when it is found; partly, through want of courage; partly, through the suspending sometimes of divine influence: and there is a difficulty to vent it rightly; that is, first, confidently, arising either from want of experience, or from an evil conscience. Secondly, pertinently, through want of prudence. Hence *Paul*, speaking of this holy boldnesse, useth the metaphor of a door, and of a door shut until God do open it: *That God would open unto us a door of utterance.* 7. As Christ in his Person, Natures and Offices, and the Gospel, which treateth of those, is a myserie: So Christ and the Gospel should be the main subject of a Ministers preaching: He ought so to preach the Law, and presse duties, as that the due relation betwixt Christ and those may be clearly held forth; Christ being the end of the Law for righteousness, *Rom.* 10. 4. *To speak the myserie of Christ.* 8.

8. Persecution for the Gospel, tendeth to the advantage of the Gospel; the more it is suppressed, the more it groweth. *Paul* is in bonds, and yet he preacheth, *Act. 26. 29. Doct. 9.* Then are people chiefly to bear burden with their Ministers by praying to God for them, when they are under persecution for the Gospel: for, *Paul* mentioneth his bonds, as an argument exciting them to pray: for which I am also in bonds. 10. It is a great part of a Ministers task, as to preach, so to make what he preacheth, plain unto the people, by dimitting himself in the whole convey of his purpose, for method, (*2 Tim. 2. 15.*) stile, (*1 Cor. 2. 4.*) and close application, (*2 Tim. 4. 2.*) so far as is possible unto the capacitie of the meanest; *That I may make it manifest*, saith he. 11. Besides this holy boldnesse and plainnesse, there are many other things which a Minister would advert to in preaching, as that he preach pertinently to the conditions of all, *Isa. 50. 4.* that he speak affectionately and with pittie, even to the most stubborn, *Jer. 4. 19.* and patiently, not wearying for want of successe, *2 Tim. 2. 25.* and zealously, with indignation against sin, *Isa. 58. 1.* and frequently, *2 Tim. 4. 2.* and self-deniedly, *2 Cor. 4. 5.* These, and many other things requisite, are all summed up by *Paul* in this comprehensive expression, *As I ought to speak.*

Vers. 5. *Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.*

He exhorteth them to wise and circumspect walking, with relation chiefly to the Heathens among whom they did live, who were without the visible Church; and that in order to this, they should close with every opportunity of doing well, and particularly wherein they might gain any of those Infidels to Christ, though with much losse to themselves in things worldly. *Doct. 1.* It is not sufficient for Christians to pray much, or go about the duties of Gods immediate worship, except they also see about other particular duties of an holy life; So, besides

prayer, he injoyneeth, *walk in wisdom.* 2. There is great wisdom required in a Christians carriage towards those who are without, to wit, unconverted Heathens without the Church; and by proportion those who evidence their non-regeneration by a profane life within the Church, (*Tit. 1. 16.*) lest we skar them from Christ, giving them occasion to speak evill of Religion, *1. Tim. 5. 14.* or we our selves be infected by them, *1 Cor. 5. 6.* *Walk in wisdom towards those who are without.* 3. The losse of credit, riches, ease, or not coming up to the full extent of our christian liberty, and that which is our right in things worldly, is not to be stood upon, rather than we lose the opportunities of doing good, chiefly of gaining a godlesse man to Christ: for, by the losse of these things, we are to redeem the time, or, opportunity: It's a Metaphor from Merchants, who prefer the least profit that may be to their pleasures and ease, closely following their businesse, when the merkats are best.

Vers. 6. Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

He directeth them how to order their speech and ordinary conference, so, as it may alwayes carry along with it delectable edification unto the hearers, being seasoned with the salt of holy and divine wisdom, whereby they should acquire ability and prudence to answer pertinently in any thing whereof they should be questioned, chiefly about the grounds of Christianitie. *Doct. 1.* We are not left to run at randon in our ordinary discourses, so, as to speak idly, *Matth. 12. 36.* much lesse profanely, *Eph. 4. 29.* but are at all times, and with all persons, to have an eye to the good of those with whom we speak, so, as both to delight and edifie them by our speech: for, this is to speak with grace; see *Ephes. 4. 29.* *Let your speech be alway with grate.* 2. That our speech may be with grace, and so both delight and edifie the

the hearers; The salt, not of bitter and satyrick jesting, (*Eph. 5. 4.*) but of divine wisdom, is required, that noysome, putrifying, and profane discourse may be eschewed, and what we speak may be so ordered upon an exact survey of time, place and company, as it may prove most savorie and acceptable unto the hearers: for, this is the use of salt, to extract putrifying humors from meats, and make them delicious to the taste, fit for digestion, and good for nourishment; *seasoned with salt.*

4. As Christians should endeavor that measure of knowledge, whereby they may be enabled to give a reason of their faith unto those who ask them: So, it is not sufficient to answer materially to that wherein we are questioned, except we answer in the right manner also, that is, confidently, understandingly, reverently and gravely, not jestingly: for, he saith not, *that ye may know with,* but *how to answer.* 5. The habituating of our selves to edifying discourse in our ordinary strain, is a profitable mean for growth in knowledge and the through understanding of those things which we know: for, the fruit to be reaped by speaking *alway with grace,* is, *that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.*

Verf. 7. *All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithfull minister, and fellow-servant in the Lord:*

8. *Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts:*
9. *With Onesimus a faithfull and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here.*

In the second part of the Chapter, the Apostle (having commended *Tychicus* from the esteem which he had of him, and from his ministerial calling) sheweth, he had sent him to them, to give them certain information concerning his own case, and to return unto him certain information concerning theirs; and that he might prove
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comfortable unto them by his presence, preaching, and otherwayes. v. 7.8. And joyneth *Onesimus* with him in the Commission, whom he also commendeth as a faithfull Christian, beloved of *Paul*, and, as it would seem, their own countrey-man, v. 9. *Doct. 1.* It concerneth a Minister much to be of a good report among, and well-esteemed of by People; that so the Word may be the more readily received from him: for this cause, *Paul*, being to send *Tychicus* to comfort their hearts, commends him much unto them, as a Christian, whom he himself loved dearly, *who is a beloved brother*; as a Minister who was faithfull for his Master, *a faithfull Minister*; as one, whom *Paul* had associated to himself sometimes as a colleague in the work of the Ministry, *Acts 20. 4.* And fellow-servant in the Lord. *2.* It is good to be rightly informed of the state of those who are sufferers for Christ; that we may accordingly sympathize with them, *Heb. 13. 3.* be preparing for the like sufferings, *Joh. 15. 20.* and encouraged by their constancie, *Phil. 1. 14.* for, *Paul* sendeth *Tychicus* to inform them of his case. *3.* The carriage of those who suffer for Truth, ought to be such, as they need not be ashamed who should know of it; *Paul* sendeth *Tychicus* to declare all his state unto them. *4.* Publick and common reports, especially of things at a distance, are not much to be trusted: A man may easily wrong both himself and others, by being too credulous of such: Hence *Paul* sendeth *Tychicus* to inform them certainly of his case; *All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you*, and whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose. *5.* It concerneth a Minister prudently to inquire and seek to know the state of those who are committed unto his charge; that he may be thereby directed how to speak to their state: for, *he sendeth Tychicus to know their estate.* *6.* The carriage of people ought to be such, as they need not be ashamed that those who are over them in the Lord, come to the knowledge of it: for, *he sendeth Tychicus, that he may know their estate.* *7.* A Christian sufferer for Truth, ought not to be so much taken up with his

his own particular concernment, as not to be affected with the tryals and sufferings of others. though possibly they be much lighter than his own; So *Paul*, though now in bonds, lendeth *Tychicus* to strengthen and comfort those Colossians under their present tryall, from the false teachers; and comfort your hearts. 8. As true grace will bring a man to esteem and credit, chiefly with those who themselves are gracious, and sometimes with others also: for it cutteth off those vices which make men contemptible, and adorneth with the contrary vertues: So, where true grace is, it will make a man reckon interest in all those who have grace, and testifie his affection unto them, whatever hath been their carriage formerly, and notwithstanding of any present disparity which may be among them otherwayes: for, here *Onesimus*, whom many take to be the same who is mentioned in the Epistle to *Philemon*, and so was once a fugitive servant, is now, being converted, intrusted with an honorable Commission, and is owned by this eminent Apostle, as his beloved brother; with *Onesimus* a faithful and beloved brother. 9. Though grace in a person be the main thing which should commend him to us; yet other naturall and civill relations, ought to have their own deserved weight: Grace doth not dissolve such bonds, but rather strengtheneth them; So *Paul* commendeth *Onesimus* unto them from this, that he was one of them.

VER. 10. *Aristarchus* my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and *Marcus* sisters sonne to *Barnabas* (touching whom ye received commandments; if he come unto you, receive him)

11. And *Jesus*, which is called *Justus*, who are of the circumcision. These onely are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

Here are salutations sent to the Church at Colosse, by three of those who were in *Paul's* company, and they are descri-

described, first, severally from their respective names and other adjuncts; next joyntly from their Nation, they were Jews; from their pains in promoting the Gospel; and from their usefulness to *Paul* himself. *Doct. 1.* Distance of place should not cool those affections of love and good-will, which ought to be among Christians: for, those salutations were outward expressions of their inward love, and they do salute, though at a distance. 2. As little mercy is to be expected from persecuters; So, the crosse of Christ, and suffering for Truth, is a thing not to be ashamed of: for, *Paul*, as it were, glorieth in the style of *Prisoner*, though he was used as a captive slave: *Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner*: the word signifieth, a captive of war. 3. As reall friendship doth not expire with prosperity; So, the sharpest sufferings of God's people, have some sweet ingredient in them: for, *Paul* hath a fellow with him while he is prisoner, even *Aristarchus*, who was his companion in travels, *Acts 19. 2.* and *20. v. 4.* and now doth not quit him in his sufferings: *Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner.* 4. Such love and respect should be had to those who are faithfull Instruments in the Church of God, that even those who have relation to them, ought to be the more respected, chiefly, if they walk in their steps; So, *Mark* is commended from this, that he was *sisters son to Barnabas*, who was separated for the work of God, *Acts 13. 3.* 5. Notwithstanding a man hath fallen, to the grief and scandall of others; yet, after evidences given of his amendment, he ought to be received and conversed with as formerly; So *Mark*, otherwayes called *John*, did desert *Paul* and *Barnabas*, *Acts 13. 13.* whereupon arose that hot contention betwixt those two Apostles, *Acts 15. 37.* But now having given proof of his remorse for what he did, he is recommended by *Paul* to those *Colossians*: *Touching whom ye have received commandments, if he come unto you, receive him.* 6. As folk should not follow the multitude of the kinde, from whom they are descended, in an evill course; So this tendeth much to a man's commendation, when he

he breaks off his evill kinde, and is not carryed away with them: for, those three were of the Jews, a people for the most part, enemies to the Gospel, *Rom. 11. 28. who are of the circumcision*, which is mentioned for their commendation, that though they were Jews, yet they had become Christians, and companions of *Paul* under his affliction. 7. There is no way which leadeth to the Kingdom of Glory, but that which is held forth in the Gospel, *Acts 4. 12.* And Christ doth rule in the world by the Gospel, subduing thereby the hearts of men to live by his Laws (*Psal. 110. 3.*) written in the Gospel, *Rom. 2. 16.* and exercising Government and Discipline in his visible Courts, according to the Rules prescribed by the Gospel, *Matth. 18. 17, 18.* Therefore the Gospel in this place is called the Kingdom of God, See *Matth. 4. 23. Mark. 4. 11. Fellow-workers unto the Kingdom of God.* 8. This maketh much unto a man's commendation, when he hath any hand in the promoting of this Kingdom, and especially when his discouragements are many, and encouragements few, from the example of others who should joyn with him in that work, and do it not: for, they are commended from this, that they onely of the circumcision were *Paul's fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God.* 9. It appeareth hence how small ground there is for the Pope's pretended supremacye and head-shipp over the Church; the main Pillar whereof, is, that because *Peter* was Bishop at Rome, therefore the Pope must be his successor: now, beside that, they can never prove *Peter* to have been Head of the Church, it is certain that he was not at Rome, when *Paul* wrote this Epistle, there being onely there then those three of the circumcision, *who were his fellow-labourers unto the Kingdom of God*: Neither is there any word in Scripture to prove, that ever *Peter* was at Rome, but much to the contrary. 10. The most eminent servants of God in time of persecution, have need of comfort, encouragement and up-flirring: so ready are the best to faint in the hour of temptation, *Dan. 11. 35.* but
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God in mercy, doth not suffer them to be destitute of some, who are comfortable and encouraging unto them, when their necessity calleth for it: for, saith he, *Which have been a comfort to me*: The word signifieth, they had been for comfort, counsell or encouragement unto him; which supponeth, that even Paul had need of those sometimes. 11. As most eminent Christians are ready to acknowledge, with thankfulness, how steadable any are made unto them in their suffering case; So it is matter of no small commendation, to be in any measure helpfull, by counsell, advice, encouragement, or comfort unto those who are suffering for Christ, and any part of his Truth: for, herein are those three commended, that they had been *a comfort unto Paul*, as is acknowledged by himself.

Verf. 12. *Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, alwayes labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect, and compleat in all the will of God.*

Here are salutations directed from *Epaphras*, who is described from his Countrey, his Office of the Ministerie, and his affection to those Colossians, testified by his fervent and constant praying to God for them, that they might be gifted with perseverance in universall, sincere and hearty obedience to the will of God. *Doct. 1.* A Minister ought not to omit any duty of civility, tending to keep a good understanding betwixt him and his flock: for, *Epaphras*, who was their Minister, (chap. 1. v. 7.) *saluteth them.* 2. The power of a call from God and his People, ought to make a man venture upon apparent inconveniences, which otherwayes he were obliged to eschew: for, *Epaphras* their own Countreyman, had embraced a call to the Ministry among those Colossians; though Christ sheweth, a Minister is in hazard to meet with disrespect in his own Countrey. *Job. 4. 44.* *who is one of you.* 3. As it is the duty of a Minister, not only

ly to preach unto, pray with ; but also to pray for his flock, and that alwayes when opportunity offereth : So, an honest Minister, who maketh conscience of this duty in earnest, will finde it to be no easie task, considering how indisposed he is sometimes to pray for himself, *Matth. 26. 40.* and how many in the flock pray not for themselves, *Matth. 13 47. &c.* and so are an heavy burden unto any who would pray for them ; and how many they are also, concerning whom God will not be intreated, *Matth. 22. 14.* Thus *Epaphras was alwayes labouring fervently for them in prayer.* The word signifieth, to be striving in a battell, and in an ageny for them. 4. A Minister ought not to rest satisfied, that he himself preacheth Truth plainly, or that the people committed to his charge, attain thereby to the knowledge of Truth ; but practice and obedience to the will of God so known, must be added, together with perseverance and constancie in their begun obedience, lest by their falling away, they lose themselves, and disgrace the Truth : for, he prayeth that they *might stand perfect and compleat in all the will of God.* 5. It is neither the pains of a Minister, nor resolution of a people, *Rom. 9. 16.* but the power of God, which worketh constancie in the way of holinesse, against the stormy blasts of severall temptations : for, *Epaphras prayeth unto God for it, that they may stand perfect and compleat in the will of God.* 6. Approved obedience to the will of God, and that which is to be aimed at, is that, which is, 1. *perfect.* to wit, with a perfection of parts, or sincere, and not hypocriticall ; *that ye may stand perfect.* 2. Hearty and willing, the affections being, as it were, filled with, and carried on by the command ; *and compleat,* or, filled. It's a Metaphor from sails filled with winde. 3. Universal, as having respect unto all the Commandments ; *In all the will of God.*

Verf. 13. *For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.*

He confirmeth by his own testimony, what he presently spoke concerning the zeal, or, fervent and burning care (for so the word signifieth) which *Epaphras* had of them and their neighbouring Churches. *Doct. 1.* Men in place and eminencie, are bound to give a testimony to the graces and gifts of any whom they know to be deserving; that so the person of whom they testifie, may be in better capacity to do good unto others, with whom such a testimony will have weight: for, *Paul* giveth as it were a testimonial unto *Epaphras*, *I bear him record, &c.* 2. It's a great part of a Minister's commendation, that, he be zealous or fervently carefull for the spirituall good of his flock; So *Paul* beareth record, that *Epaphras* had a great zeal for these *Colossians*, the people of his charge, chap. 1. v. 7. 3. A Minister's zeal ought to be extended towards others of Christ's Members, than those of his proper charge, and chiefly unto those Churches which ly nearest unto him, as being in a nearer capacitie by their good or evill example, to advance or retard the work of God among his own flock: So, *Paul* beareth record, that *Epaphras* had a great zeal for those in *Laodicea*, and *Hierapolis*, which were neighbouring Churches.

Verf. 14. *Luke the beloved Physician, and Demas greet you.*

Here are some salutations sent from *Luke* and *Demas*. *Doct. 1.* As Christ, when he is about to supply his Church with a Ministry, will take men of any calling, whom he pleaseth to choosse, and make them Ministers: So, worldly advantage is not to be stood upon when Christ calleth: for, *Luke*, the same, as it seemeth, who wrote the Gospel, was before a Physician, and had now become

become a Minister ; though his former calling would have advantaged him more , chiefly at those times when Civill Authority did allow no maintenance for Ministers ; *Luke the beloved Physician*. 2. Men in place chiefly, should lay out their love and respect so wisely, that it may tend to a man's commendation to be respected by them, as being known to lay out their affection upon none but such as are worthy of it ; So *Paul* calleth *Luke, beloved*, to wit, by him, that hereby he may commend him to them ; *Luke the beloved Physician*. 3. There are many fair Professors within the Visible Church , who may afterwards turn Apostats, who so long as they keep the mask of a Profession, will not be behind with the best in externall duties, yea, and often do out-strip others : for, this *Demas*, (whom many take to be the same who is spoken of, 2 *Tim*. 4. 10. to have turned Apostate, and as some write, an Idolatrous Priest) is here among the first in saluting those Colossians : *And Demas greet you*. 4. Though judicious Ministers may have their own fears, concerning such fore-mentioned Professors ; yet so long as they continue in the externall duties of Christianity, they ought to give unto them that outward respect which is given unto others : but withall, Ministers would be sparing to ingage much in the commendation of any, whom they have ground to suspect will prove such, untill time try what they are : for, *Paul* writeth the salutation of *Demas* among the rest, though it is like he had his own fears concerning him ; for, he commendeth him not as he did the rest ; *And Demas greet you*.

Vers. 15. Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the Church which is in his house.

The Apostle directs them to salute in his name , the Christians at Laodicea, that so they might be prepared to hear this Epistle with greater attention : And above all the rest he saluteth one. *Nymphas* (a man eminent for
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piety) and the Church at his house; whereby may be meant both a Congregation of Christians, to whom he had given his house for a place of publick assembling to Divine Worship; As also, his own Family, who were piously instructed, and orderly governed, as if they had been a Church. *Doct. 1.* People are not so to make use of the respect and affection which a publick Minister carryeth unto them, as to make others equally deserving, jealous of him, as if he did carry no such respect unto them: for, the Apostle imployeth those Colossians, *to salute in his name the brethren which were in Laodicea*, as if he had said, Let them know, I carry the same respect unto them, which I carry unto you. 2. However a Minister be tyed to respect all the Members of the Church, and to evidence so much, by discharging all common duties towards them; yet he is bound to put some more respect upon those who are more eminent for piety among them; that so by his countenancing the appearances of piety, he may make it the more desirable and lovely: for, *Paul saluteth Nymphas* in particular. 3. As the Primitive Church had not the countenance of Civill Authority to provide, upon the Publick expence, places for the Congregation to meet, and publick maintenance for Ministers: So, such was the fervor of love to the Gospel then, that private Christians did contribute largely and freely for the up-holding of it: Charity did move to give more then, than force of Law can now: for, *Nymphas* gives his house to be a publick Place of meeting for the Church: *and the Church at his house.* 4. Masters of Families should so train up their household, in the exercise of Divine Worship, and in a godly conversation, by instructing the ignorant, *1 Cor. 14. 35.* rebuking and censuring the disobedient and profane, *Psal. 101. 7.* and by discharging all duties of worship, competent to the Master of a Family, and causing his Family to joyn with him, *Josh. 24. -- 15.* that they may deserve the name of a Church: So much is imported by
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those words, *the Church at his house*, as they contain a designation of his Family.

Verf. 16. *And when this Epistle is read amongst you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the Epistle from Laodicea.*

He directeth them, that, after they have read this Epistle themselves, they would cause it be read in the Church of the Laodiceans, who, being their neighbours, were infested with the same errors; And that some other Epistle, written from Laodicea, either from the whole Church, or from their Ministers, as it seemeth unto *Paul*, informing him of their case, should be read by the Colossians, for better clearing of some passages in this Epistle. *Dock. 1.* As Scripture is to be read and perused even by private Christians; so, the doctrine contained in Scripture, even that which is expressly directed to some particular Churches or persons, is of universall use unto all others: Thus they are commanded, having read this Epistle themselves, to cause read it in the Church of Laodicea, as being usefull for them also. 2. The helps of other mens writings, may, and should be made use of for the better understanding of Scripture: for, this Epistle from Laodicea, was not written by *Paul* himself, who had never been there, chap. 2. v. 1. but by the Laodiceans themselves: and *Paul* will have it read for the further clearing of this Epistle, which was written by himselfe: *And that ye likewise read the Epistle from Laodicea.*

Verf. 17. *And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministerie which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it.*

He directeth them to admonish their Minister *Archippus*, (who in the absence of his Colleague *Epaphras* had the more burden, and it seemeth, had fallen somewhat

slack) both to consider the nature and weight of the Ministeriall charge with which he was intrusted by Christ, and that he would faithfully discharge all the parts of it. *Doct. 1.* There is no ground from this Scripture, for placing a power of jurisdiction in People over their Ministers, to call them to a judiciall accompt, and to inflict the censures of the Church upon them: for, all that is here said, inferreth no more than an admonition from charity, which any private Christian might have given to their Minister, and not an authoritative censure or rebuke: Paul speaketh otherwayes, when he would establish any power of that kinde; As *1 Tim. 6. 17. Charge them that are rich, &c.* but here onely, *Say unto Archippus. 2.* As the best of Ministers are ready to fall slack in their duty, and have need of up-stirring, they have so much to do, *2 Cor. 2. 16.* and for the most part see so small fruits of what they do, *Isai. 49. 4.* So it is the duty of people to have an eye upon their Minister, how he discharge his Office, and when they see a fault in him, to tell himself of it, admonishing him for it: but withall, they would do this in love, and so, as they may evidence all due respect, both to his Person and Function: for, he directeth them to *Say unto Archippus, take heed to thy ministry,* and not back-bite or rail upon *Archippus. 3.* That a man may conscientiously go about his calling, he would know the nature of such a Charge, and what it requireth: Particularly a Minister would know; First, that his Calling is a *Ministry*, a laborious service, or a working, as it were, through dust and myre: for, so the word signifieth. And secondly, that however the designation of the person unto the Ministry be from man, *Acts 6. 3. and 14. 23.* yet the Office it self is from Jesus Christ, to whom he must be countable for his carriage in it: for, saith he, *Say unto Archippus, take heed to thy ministry, which thou hast received in the Lord. Doct. 4.* It is not sufficient for any man, chiefly for a Minister, to know the nature of his Calling, and what it doth require, unlesse also he make
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conscience to discharge it when it is known, and to discharge all the parts of it, that so he may fulfill it; *that thou fulfill it*: so were they to say to *Archippus*.

Verf. 18. *The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.*

This verse containeth the conclusion of the Epistle, which he sheweth, was written with his own hand, and not by a Secretary, as the rest of the Epistle was: And in it, having saluted them, he craveth, they would remember his bonds, and wisheth unto them God's grace and favour, with all spirituall benefits flowing from it. *Doct. 1.* Satan's malice, and man's impudence, did come to that hight, even while the Apostles themselves were alive, as to endeavour the corrupting of Scripture, by calling that Scripture which was not: for, to prevent such impostures, Paul writeth the salutation with his own hand, that the Epistle may be known to be his, *2 Thess. 3. 17. The salutation by the hand of me Paul.* 2. God hath sufficiently provided in his Word, against the fore-mentioned evill, by putting such marks upon Scripture, as may be a clear difference betwixt it and all humane writings; Paul's own hand-writing did serve for such a mark in his Epistles; *The salutation by the hand of me Paul*: And though this mark doth not extend unto all Scripture, neither can it give faith now, the first Copy of his Epistles being lost; yet there are other marks or arguments taken from Scripture. whereby it doth sufficiently evidence it self to be the Word of God, as the consent of all its parts, though written at diverse times, and by severall hands; the fulfilling of its prophecies; the majestie and simplicity of the style; the power of its doctrine. &c. 3. As the most eminent servants of Christ may be put to personall sufferings for Truth; So, it is the duty of all Christians to remember them under their sufferings, so as to pray to God for them, v. 2, 3. to see the worth of Truth,
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for which they suffer, in their resolute under-going of the crosse, and suffering for it, *Acts* 21. 13. So as to fore-arm themselves for the like sufferings, *Job*. 15. 20. and to supply them also in their outward necessities, *Phil.* 4. 14. In order to all those, it seemeth, *Paul* hath desired them to *remember his bonds*. 4. Though Christians may use an ordinary form of words in saluting of, and expressing their best wishes unto those with whom they converse; yet they ought to be reall, and not formall onely in using of it, as understanding what they wish, and being affectionate and sincere in their wish: for, *Paul* doth affix his *Amen* unto his ordinary farewell wish: *Grace be with you, Amen.*



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